

Title: What is the point of homework and
Should schools set it?

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WHAT IS THE POINT OF HOMEWORK AND
SHOULD SCHOOLS SET IT?

Wendy Edwards

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The research on homework since the 19th century in the United Kingdom (UK) shows that there are considerable issues to be addressed in this area. Governments have discussed it and the media have reported on it and it is still a contentious issue for schools and homes alike. This study shows that there has been very little change in the issues surrounding homework for over a hundred years and that no political party in office will take a stand on it. Even though schools would like to see a change in policy it is not on the government agenda.

The study worked with six secondary schools in one town over a fixed time period to collect information to discuss some of those questions being asked around the issues related to homework.

The literature review looked at documents dating back to 1880 when similar questions were being asked about the relevance of "keeping in" and in 1881 "home lessons" was a newspaper article. A teacher training manual in 1885 contained a chapter on home lessons and those advantages and disadvantages described in the book are very similar to the advantages and disadvantages described in 2004. Hansard recorded discussions in parliament from 1884 about the overpressure put on pupils. Home conditions and the support given by parents in completing homework have been discussed both in the media and in parliament. Comparisons are made between homework in the UK and other similar countries using internationally collected data.

The mixed method research included questioning students, families, teachers and governors. Interviews were conducted with senior teachers at the schools, with responsibility for implementing the homework policy. School documents were scrutinised including the home-school agreement, homework policies and homework guidelines for students, families and teachers.

The findings of this study showed that there are differences between the main stakeholders, students, families, teachers and governors, in the knowledge, views and opinions of homework. Students, families, teachers and governors differed in their opinions, with many students and families, although seeing some benefits, opposing the setting of homework due to the impact on family time and the stress caused by it. While teachers and governors supported the setting of homework and the important contribution it made in school. There are differences between different types of schools and those with lower and higher ability students and the influence that homework has on the stress levels of those students in higher performing schools. Homework is seen as a marketing tool for some schools to use in selling themselves on the competing educational market place.

The findings of this study continue to ask the questions related to homework and in particular What is the purpose of homework?, What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?, Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home? and What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate: Wendy Edwards

Signature:

Date:

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

As a Class Teacher, Head of Department, Senior Teacher and School Governor, homework has long been a concern of the researcher. As a teacher the researcher was required to follow school policy in setting homework. As a Head of Department and Senior Teacher the researcher was expected to monitor both whether, and what, homework was set. As a School Governor the researcher was responsible for reviewing school policy. From all these experiences the researcher was left with the fundamental question about whether homework was necessary in the first place and, if so, whether it was always relevant and appropriate.

Research on homework in the UK since the 19th century shows a great deal of uncertainty in relation to this question. This thesis investigates a number of questions that recur throughout the literature from 1870 to 2015.

- What is the purpose of homework?
- What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?
- Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?
- What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

The intention of this study was to address these questions as they relate to the purpose and relevance of homework in state secondary education at the current time in six secondary schools in one urban area, from the position of stakeholders: students, teachers, governors and families, and to compare their views. The study showed how these questions are not only relevant to issues around homework currently but that they may also pertain to future research given the paucity of any fixed clear guidelines being set down by government(s). Findings related to each question have been addressed separately and then together.

Homework, according to Gordon (1980), has been an unchanging fact of school life for over one hundred years and that it "reflects the changing views of childhood and leisure and raises the question of the relationship between school and home".

The current study adopts Hallam's (2006) view of homework as any work set by the school which was undertaken out of school hours. Homework can be completed at home, or in some schools, at homework clubs. It can be completed alone or with others, including friends and family members (Sharp et al, 2001).

Context for the study

This study was carried out at a time when particular factors in the national context had very clear implications for schools and homework. These factors include:

- the effect of the marketization of education following the 1988 Education Act and the issues that such marketisation has brought about: competition between schools to achieve the highest possible examination results on league tables, accountability mechanisms, free

parental choice of school for their offspring, and as a consequence the desire of schools to present themselves publically in the most favourable light, pressure on school during inspection through the government inspection arm, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), to achieve the highest possible grading, and so on;

- the increased encouragement of private provision and autonomy within the state system. With so many schools changing status, with the greater freedoms that changed status may bring but at the same time a sustained level of accountability for students' progress and achievement, this is an appropriate time to review the rationale underpinning the place of homework in the curriculum;
- ambivalence over parental rights and responsibilities with regard to education. On the one hand parents and families have considerable rights in terms of decision making about their children's education for example choice of schools, and so on. On the other hand there are particular expectations placed on families, as exemplified in the home-school agreement which may appear to be legal requirements, as discussed further in the literature review below. Homework is one of those areas which seems to have no basis in law, although mention of it appears in the home-school agreement.

Effect of the marketization of education

The current approach to homework, both from the government guidance documents and also in the way that schools manage this aspect of the school curriculum should be seen in light of other education law that, following the Education Reform Act of 1988, encouraged a neo-liberal market-driven approach to education which led to competition, consumer choice and pressure on resources. Features of the 1988 Act that are potentially relevant to homework include the introduction of the National Curriculum, local management of schools, Grant Maintained Status and open enrolment in

schools. Examples of curriculum requirements that had far-reaching consequences for schools' homework policies and practices are the introduction of the compulsory, subject-based curricular framework and a national system of assessment based on norms and focused on results which could be used to evaluate the 'effectiveness' of schools. The increasing focus on 'norms' inevitably led to a greater emphasis on raising achievement. The consequence of open enrolment meant schools used their websites and public policy documents to present themselves in the best possible light.

Private provision and autonomy

Although government guidelines relating to homework are in place, with more academies and free schools setting up and dictating their own curriculum, these can only be guidelines. With this changing context within state schools, the school can be independent in setting homework and this may induce schools to start questioning the purpose of it and why they are including it in the curriculum. Some schools are now extending the school day instead of sending work home.

Parental rights and entitlements

A number of terms have been used to describe the relationship between families and schools. As Wearmouth (2016) comments, parental 'involvement', 'engagement' and 'partnership' can refer to a whole range of activities: good parenting, helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions and other activities including school PTA and school governor (Hallgarten, 2000). Some researchers have suggested that parental involvement can have a significant effect on achievement and wellbeing when it occurs at home (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). 'Parental engagement' implies engagement in the child's learning process (Goodall et al., 2011). Research has shown that such engagement can have a significantly positive impact on achievement and wellbeing (Deforges &

Abouchaar, 2003, Campbell 2011, Shah, 2001, Wearmouth and Berryman, 2011). Parent partnership involves a 'full sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences' between families and the school and, ideally, 'must be equal' (Jones, 2004, p. 39). It seems logical, therefore, that schools might aim to encourage parental/family involvement in the child's education with engagement and partnership in order that the information families have as experts about their children combined with the information teachers have about learning and the curriculum may work together in the interests of all young people (Wearmouth, 2016).

Parents and carers have not always had a statutory entitlement to be consulted over decisions about their children's education in state schools/colleges. For a long time after education for (almost) all children became compulsory, families had obligations not entitlements. In the 1870 Elementary Education Act (p.471), School Boards were empowered, with the approval of the Education Department, to make byelaws that required:

[...] the parents of children of such age, not less than five years nor more than thirteen years, as may be fixed by the byelaws, to cause such children (unless there is some reasonable excuse) to attend school.

Much more recently, however, parental engagement in children's education has been a key issue in education policy in the UK with discussion of this in, for example, the Plowden Report (1967), the Taylor Report (DES 1977), the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) and then the 1981 Education Act.

Official government views of the rights and entitlements of families to have their opinions taken into account with regard to the education of their children are exemplified in Section 19 of Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014

which requires that the views, wishes and feelings of parents, and their participation, must be central to every decision the Local Authority makes. As further evidence of the government's intention that the wishes of families should play a central role in the education system the government has published a series of new guides for parents and carers (DfE, 2014e). In the guide related to the 2014 Act, for example, parents and families (p.11)

[...] should have a real say in decisions that affect their children, should have access to impartial information, advice and support and know how to challenge decisions they disagree with.

There is some ambivalence in expressed government policy around the issue of families' rights of decision-making about their children's education, however. Sections 110 and 111 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 required schools to publish a Home-School Agreement (DfEE, 1998b). Such an agreement is defined as a statement (DfE, 2013:3) that explains:

- the school's aims and values;
- the school's responsibilities towards its pupils who are of compulsory school age;
- the responsibility of each pupil's parents; and
- what the school expects of its pupils

Whilst schools are required to take 'reasonable' steps (ibid.) to ensure that parents understand and sign this agreement, there is no absolute requirement to do so. Further (ibid., p. 4):

Breaches of the terms of the agreement will not be actionable through the courts. Furthermore, a child must not be excluded

from school, or face punishment, as a result of a parent's failure to sign the agreement or abide by their declaration. Furthermore parents should not face any sanction for either not signing the home-school agreement or failing to abide by its requirements.

The implications here, therefore, are that whilst certain expectations are placed on families in relation to their children's attendance and behaviour at a particular school, these expectations are not legally enforceable. This is an especially important point here given that homework is a suggested topic for inclusion in these agreements but there is no legal way in which the terms of the agreement are binding on families.

Pilot study

In preparation for the main research a pilot (feasibility) study was conducted with one secondary school to test out the data collecting tool. It was therefore important to select a school that would be accessible to undertake this. The school was chosen as a result of personal contact and was located in a large town in the East of England. The four stakeholder groups, students, families, teachers and governors, were chosen to take part in the study as they had some involvement in homework. Students are now encouraged to have a 'voice' in their education. Parents have a choice as to which school they send their children. Teachers are accountable for students' academic achievement. Governors have legal responsibility for the running of the school. It was therefore important to hear their views on this issue in education. It also investigated the school homework policy to see how well it matched the expectations of all involved. As a result of the pilot the data collection tools were amended slightly for the main study.

Main study

The six secondary schools involved in the main study were from different areas of one town and covered most catchment areas. The town was in South East England and chosen as it had a range of schools located within it. This school sample included a faith school, a new school, an academy, a school with an Ofsted grading of 'notice to improve', one with a grading of 'outstanding' and a school with teaching school status.

The schools were chosen through professional and personal contact. In each school one Year Ten tutor group was selected by the school to participate in the research. The study included students from a diverse range of backgrounds and abilities, their families, all teaching staff at the schools and all governors. Interviews took place with members of the senior leadership team who had responsibility for the curriculum and homework. Key documents related to homework were analysed, including homework policy, and the home-school agreement.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2, 'Literature review', reviews a range of research studies and published commentaries related to the purpose of homework as viewed at different points in time from 1870 to 2015, largely in the UK with some references to international contexts;

Chapter 3, 'Methodology', justifies and describes the research methodology appropriate to collecting and collating data relevant to addressing the research questions;

Chapter 4: 'Context of the Study The Town and the Schools', describes the demographics of the schools included in the main study as the context in which to understand the findings from each one;

Chapter 5: 'Findings: school documents and interviews', sets out a thematic analysis of the findings from the documentary analysis and the interviews, and relates these themes to the main questions;

Chapter 6, 'Findings: questionnaires', analyses findings by theme and relates these to the questions that have been asked;

Chapter 7: 'Discussion', discusses the findings in relation to the main, and three other key, questions;

Chapter 8: 'Implications, evaluation of study and conclusions', draws out implications of the study as a whole, although there is no attempt to generalise from data drawn from a limited number of schools. It goes on to offer a discussion of the strengths and constraints of this particular study, and the contribution to knowledge, offers an overall conclusion, and concludes with suggestions for possible further research in the area of homework.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter overviews academic and other literature relevant to the current research study. It is organised in chronological order and within each period of time the main themes that emerged from the literature have been drawn out. It can be seen all the way through from 1880 that the recurring themes include home-school agreements, school policies, homework guidelines, parental involvement and home environments. The future of homework and new ways of working in schools and at home is also discussed. Included in this will be the findings of Educational Trusts in the UK and international data comparisons.

2.1 Overview of Literature Review

The initial search of literature focused solely on the term "homework" and yielded over 500,000 sources, therefore the search needed to focus on more specific key terms, these being, Homework AND England AND Purpose AND/OR reasons AND/OR advantages AND/OR policy AND/OR history AND/OR parents AND/OR families AND/OR governor AND/OR governing body AND/OR teachers AND/OR school AND/OR pupils AND/OR student. Any sources prior to 1870 when (almost) universal primary education was introduced were excluded. The search engines for the initial search included Google Scholar, Hansard, Lexis, Newsbank, Resource Discovery Tool (Discovery) and EBSCOhost.

From each search, where relevant sources were found, they were used to "snowball" further references. This "snowball" approach also meant that when a reference cited another author the original resource was sourced.

For example, the systematic review of literature carried out by Hallam (2004) focussed on the questions surrounding the purposes, advantages, disadvantages, support and impact of homework in the school curriculum, namely Gordon (1980), MacBeath and Turner (1990), Sharp *et al* (2001) and Weston (1999). These research studies included different aspects of interest to the current study and some questions asked in these studies have been included in the current study. These studies also referenced other work and these too have been researched and found to include information which has been incorporated in the current study, in particular Department of Education publications on homework guidelines, policies and reports. These included the Board of Education Educational Pamphlet No. 110 on homework published in 1937 and the Crichton-Browne's Report on Elementary Schools in 1884. Another example of "snowballing" was "School Work" by Gladman (1885), a text book for training teachers. After reading an article online about homework in Australia in March 2015, Horsely and Walker, the authors of "Reforming Homework", were contacted at their universities in Australia asking about homework guidelines and policies in Australia. They sent a copy of their book and in it was found a quote by Gladman in 1898 referring to the purposes of homework. The original 1885 textbook was found and this has been referenced in the literature review.

A search of newspaper articles was carried out using Lexis Newspapers and Newsbank data banks dating back to 1880 when home lessons were discussed as issues of the time. These newspapers included The Children's Newspaper (1936), The School Guardian (1880, 1881 and 1884), The Schoolmaster (1880), The Spectator (1884), The Sunday Times (2008), The Telegraph (2013a) and The Times Educational Supplement (1929, 1935 and 2013) each giving a view of homework at the time.

Government reports and transcripts of Parliamentary discussion regarding homework were searched through Hansard (1884, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1961 and 2005) from the website <https://hansard.parliament.uk> <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons>). Information about government policy regarding homework policy, school agreement and guidelines were received through discussion with the past Secretaries of State for Education, Estelle Morris and Nicky Morgan.

The search for parental views led to the Joseph Rowntree Trust and the works of Solomon *et al* (2002) and Barn *et al* (2006). United Kingdom (UK) data was compared with other countries using the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2013 data, OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 data.

The education of socio-economic groups was investigated through the Sutton Trust (2009, 2015a and 2015b) data. The documents, publications and reports which were directly relevant to homework in England were the main area of focus with reference made to international comparisons if they were related to the study.

Homework has been discussed since “payment by results” for teachers was introduced in 1883 following the Education Acts between 1870 and 1880. The Elementary Education Act 1870 was introduced by William Forster on 17 February 1870 during the Liberal Government of William Gladstone. This Act set up school boards to establish supervision of schools. Ten years later on 26 August 1880, again under a Gladstone government, the Elementary Education Act was introduced stating that all children were to attend school until they were 10 years old. An important argument for establishing universal education was to enable Britain to remain in the frontline of manufacturing and industry with an educated workforce.

Homework is still discussed today. Although there are Government guidelines on setting homework they are still only recommendations as homework has never been made compulsory by law.

A number of issues surrounding homework are examined in this literature review. Arguments for and against homework vary. Research has included investigating the benefits of homework, the academic achievement of students and preparing them for either examinations or employment or both. This became apparent in the United States during the "Cold War" and "Space Race" of the 1950s. Part of the discussion focussed on the amount and range of homework set and alongside this, the introduction of homework policies and government guidelines. Some researchers have looked at the value of homework and campaigns have taken place for a reduction in the amount of it as it is perceived to have had a detrimental effect on home life. Campaigns have also focussed on health concerns and in particular the mental and physical effects on students. The necessity for extra resources and homework clubs has been introduced into some schools to support students in completing homework.

The literature review here will illustrate that it is clear that more recent research and discussion of homework could be classified under Hallam's four key headings, political, economic, social and educational.

“Homework is not new. It has a long and controversial history. Since the mid-nineteenth century it has been used to supplement the school curriculum, and in the UK as elsewhere, it has been more or less fashionable depending on the political, economic, social and educational factors.”

(Hallam 2004, p1)

In summary and as noted above on pages 28 and 29, a number of questions recur throughout the history of homework in the UK,

- What is the purpose of homework?
- What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?
- Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?
- What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

2.2 Homework in England after 1870

The literature review starts in 1870 when attendance at school was made compulsory in the Elementary Education Act, known as the Forster Act after William Edward Forster, the Vice-president of the Council, who was responsible for the Act. As explained by McClure (1986), Forster, on 17 February 1870 in the House of Commons, introduced the Elementary Education Bill and he stated that there were about 1.5 million children educated in schools at the time, or at least on the registers of schools. Two-fifths of the children of working class families between the ages of six and ten years were registered and one-third of those between ten and twelve years of age. Forster estimated that of all children between six and twelve years of age, 950,000 had been helped and 1,500,000 had not been educationally supported. His concern was that there were not enough schools and that the quality was not of a high enough standard. He also stated that there were a large number of parents who either could not or would not send their children to school and that it was the duty of parents to make sure their children attended. Education was now compulsory for all children aged between five

and thirteen years. However if there was not a school within three miles of the child's house they were excused attending and those living in rural areas could be absent from school for up to six weeks to help with agricultural work. He stated that the country would be mapped so that all areas of the country were included in the newly formed school districts. This Act also saw the setting up of the School Board through the development of those school districts. Each district throughout the country would be responsible for evaluating the state of education in their area. Based on the findings School Board schools would be set up in those areas where there was a need for efficient education. The School Board would establish and run the elementary school and they would finance this through local and government funding and through school fees, the "school pence". Church schools had already been set up, however the growth of Board Schools soon overtook them with new schools built. Martin (1979) explained that in 1870 one million pupils were in inspected schools and this had risen to six million in 1900. Martin also stated that in the six months after the 1870 Act, 3342 building grant applications were made. The curriculum at this time was designed to support the needs of the working population and children would be instructed in the skills required for future employment in manual work such as shipyards, mines and factories, whereas girls received training in domestic service and retailing. Although attendance was compulsory it was not free and parents not only had to pay for their children to be educated but they were also losing the valuable family income their children would have been earning. The Liberal government under Gladstone was taking the education of children seriously, as it was seen that if the country was to be able to compete internationally in the growing economic market place, it would need a workforce to support it. However it was not until the 1880 Elementary Education Act that compulsory education was enforced from five to ten years of age. This Act would be criticised later by Balfour when he introduced his 1902 Education Act, as it was disorganised in the way schools were set up

with board schools and voluntary schools in competition with each other and that the cost of compulsory education had been underestimated.

Hallam (2004) outlined the history of homework in the UK and showed that attitudes towards homework reflected political and economic issues as well as dominant philosophies of education and that homework went in and out of fashion depending on these factors.

Gordon (1980) stated that the recognition of homework for well over the past one hundred years was that it did support and supplement the school curriculum. 'A Lady' (c.1870) cited in Gordon (1980) explained that it was reasonable for teachers to be concerned about the academic development of their pupils with so few hours at school and thirty to forty hours was given as the example at that time. This was supported 100 years later by Rutter *et al* (1979) in their report, which examined the effects of schooling on secondary age children, they found that homework strengthened the work carried out in school.

According to Gordon (1980) by the early 1900s homework was regarded as a valuable aid to learning. Gordon (1980) went on to explain that entry to professions such as the civil service and universities looked at academic results as entry to these institutions and caused external pressure on schools. The practice of "keeping in" was introduced when pupils who required additional support would remain at school for extra coaching. In 1880 this was condemned by school boards and parents even though it was seen to support the country economically.

A School Board Assistant, remaining anonymous, wrote in "The Schoolmaster" in October 1880 about the pressure put on pupils and teachers at that time (Appendix 1). In order to achieve the required standard

the scholar was "kept in" and this was seen by the School Board Assistant as having a disregard for the health of the scholar, the inconvenience to the family and the health of the teacher. They concluded their piece by stating that the school inspector, manager and board insisted on measuring the value of their work by the results in the annual exams therefore putting pressure on the teachers and keeping both teacher and scholar at "studies after school hours". At the same time parents were showing their concern about the amount of homework being set and one subscriber, writing anonymously, in "*The School Guardian*" in March 1881 explained that parents at his school did not want their children to be given extra coaching or homework (Appendix 2). The subscriber explained in the letter to the editor that parents had objected to their children taking work home or being kept in after school to complete any work and that the discipline at the school was being affected. "Payment by Results" in 1882 meant that salaries of teachers depended on the academic outcomes of their pupils putting pressure on teachers to give pupils extra work outside the school day.

Pressure on children to complete homework led to questions in the House of Lords from July 1883 (Gordon, 1980). Questions were around whether the Education Department could make homework compulsory in elementary schools. Discussions centred on the mental and physical strain put on pupils by giving them excessive school work. Arguments included the burden put on students and teachers by the payments by results system. In 1884 the legal side of home lessons was brought to the forefront when a headmaster was sued for a minor assault when a pupil was detained at lunch time for not completing the home lessons.

Dr. James Crichton Browne, a leading psychiatrist and psychologist of the time, delivered a report on the 19 June 1884 to the Education Department on the alleged over-pressure of work in elementary schools. This report, known

as the Elementary Schools Dr Crichton-Browne's Report, was initiated following a discussion on the 16 February 1884 between Dr Crichton-Browne and the Right Honourable Anthony J. Mundella, the Vice President of the Council (Crichton-Browne, 1884). Crichton-Browne was tasked with investigating the health of children in elementary schools. He was accompanied by J.G. Fitch, Her Majesty's Principal Inspector of schools, and visited fourteen schools in London, both board and denominational school. Discussion took place in Parliament on 16 June 1884 over this report and it was remarked that overpressure existed in schools and if left unchecked could result in serious consequences for future generations. Crichton-Browne (1884) stated that this overpressure included homework which he saw as a worry and sometimes a torment for the pupils. On the 16 July 1884 it was stated that the Education Acts did not authorise the enforcement of the preparation of lessons at home by children attending a board school. Crichton-Browne later wrote in *The School Guardian* (1884) (Appendix 3) explaining that parents would forbid home lessons and that they would put books on the fire. He also saw home lessons as bad in principle and that young children needed time for rest. He explained that in schools in London where the lowest class children attended it would be no use setting homework as the children had to help at home or work in another way. In some homes parents did not object to "home lessons" but the children found it difficult to complete their work due to the overcrowding in the home and social conditions.

"A one roomed house with five or six restless and noisy inmates is not the best place for the calm exercise of the intellect."

(The School Guardian, 1884 p646)

Crichton-Browne in *The School Guardian* (1884) continued to say that even in the homes of the "better classes" the principle of homework was bad. Homework was seen to stir up and irritate an exhausted and feeble brain and also interfered with sleep. He described physical signs in the children of eye strains and rounded backs over their work. The homework environment was beginning to be discussed and concern was raised about it. Crichton-Browne questioned whether the correct curriculum was undertaken in school if it meant that work had to continue at home as there was not enough time to complete the work during the school day. Child development and the welfare of the child was a concern at the time but again no government or political party would take a lead on suggesting that homework should not take place.

In the same *School Guardian* (1884) (Appendix 3) the Nottingham School Board reported on a meeting of the board in relation to home lessons. The Association of Head Teachers in that board was requesting guidance regarding home lessons. The guidance stated that home lessons should be graded and suit the children's ability and the length of time to be spent on homework was given as half an hour. Head teachers were also instructed to supervise the homework set by the school assistants and junior teachers to ensure that appropriate homework was given. Home lessons would not be given to pupils in the infants classes or those pupils who had health issues or mental strain. Home lessons were not to be set if parents objected but schools should encourage the cooperation of parents. Following the election of the conservative government in 1885, the Royal Commission on Elementary Education was established and the report of the findings of the commission was published in 1886. The Royal Commission examined the issues around homework but made no recommendations (Parliamentary Papers, 1886). This will be repeated later when guidelines are recommended but not made statutory by any political party.

During 1884 articles and responses were published in The Spectator entitled "Home lessons in elementary schools". The original article was submitted by Edith Lupton, a member of the Bradford School Board, and published on 19 January 1884 (Appendix 4). Edith Lupton described a court case which concerned a number of pupils and their families. Homework was being set to young children who were suffering through ill health, had to support their families and often had little space to study due to overcrowding. The article quoted Section Nine of the Education Acts and stated that parents could employ their child in any suitable way provided the child attended school during the hours school was open. Unfortunately as children were working for their parents they were not able to complete their home lessons and were therefore punished by their teacher. The following week there was a response in the paper from "Alpha" (Appendix 5) in which they stated that home lessons were "universal and beneficial use" in other schools in England including secondary, primary and some elementary schools and also in elementary schools in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and the United States. The article went on to say that home lessons had not been an issue and were welcomed by parents who saw home lessons as making school work "more real and more interesting" and that there had been no health issues seen. Standards in education should not be lowered but school managers and teachers should be aware of any concern regarding home lesson and should take appropriate action. The response went on to describe and quote a letter published by the Education Department to the Secretary of the National Union of Elementary Teachers explaining that best practice showed that home lessons, if well planned and tasks suitable, would have valuable effect in the educational progress of the pupil and the interest of the parents in their child's school work.

On 21 June 1884 (Appendix 6) the issue was once again raised by the Editor responding to a statement made by A J Mandella, the Vice President of the

Committee on Education in Gladstone's Liberal Government. Mandella had said that for progress to be made in education, pupils had to attend school and grades in examinations should increase. The Editor stated that in order for results to increase then home lessons had to take place, as the amount of work needed in order to achieve higher grades could not be completed during the school hours. He was referring to the court case in Bradford and explained that teachers did not have the power under any law to insist on home lessons being completed and therefore the pupil could not be punished as no law had been broken. The Editor also explained that Bradford schools had extended their school day to take into account those pupils who needed to complete their home lessons in school time. This was perhaps one of the first examples of a homework club. London schools gave their parents the opportunity of opting out of home lessons and their teachers were instructed to be aware of any pupils with health issues and to adapt any home lessons accordingly. A week later Edith later once again wrote defending her position on home lessons, (Appendix 7), and gave two reasons why pupils in Germany showed more progress than pupils in England, they had shorter school hours and therefore home lessons did not have an impact of the health of the pupil and that teachers in Germany were trained and more efficient teachers. In response to this the Editor wrote

"We have never doubted that for very young children home lessons should not be enforced. We have no doubt that for elder children they ought to be enforced."

(The Spectator, 28 June 1884, p.850)

Fredrick John Gladman was born in London in 1839. After attending a Lancastrian school he become a pupil-teacher and eventually trained to become a teacher and later a head teacher. After co-editing one book, he wrote School Method in 1877 and School Work Series in 1885. In the

publication *School Work*, Gladman (1885) advised teachers and student teachers on the purposes and advantages of homework or home lessons, as they were called at the time, including the problems associated with home lessons.

Advantages

1. Recapitulation
2. Preparation
3. Independent work
4. Useful evening employment
5. Preparation for inspection
6. Co-operation of parents

Possible abuses

1. Mal-preparation
2. Unfair work
3. Non co-operation of parents
4. Too much
5. Mal-examination

(Gladman, 1885 p162)

These purposes, advantages and disadvantages of homework will be revisited later when they are described by Hallam (2004) and it will be seen that very little changed in the one hundred years between 1898 and 2004.

Gladman described the advantages as recapitulating the lessons covered during the day so that they are fixed in the pupil's mind and so that the teacher could assess whether the pupil had understood the work and to give feedback on future planning. Home lessons were a preparation for the next day and ground work could be made. Independent thinking and working was seen as a useful discipline. The pupil was usefully employed in the evening.

Home lessons prepared the pupil for the inspection as they may be similar to parts of the test. Home lessons helped parents to understand what their child had done at school and their level of achievement and in so doing had increased the parents interest in school and the support they would give to their child. It was seen that those pupils who received support from home achieved more at school. If work was too difficult for the pupils they could ask for help but the teacher needed to be able to see what the pupil could achieve and what he needed to teach them in the future. Cooperation of parents was important and Gladman suggested that some parents would have been supportive but others saw school as the environment for learning and not home. At home their children should be able to play or be at their disposal. It was also thought that children would require rest and play after the strain of school work and that "home lessons therefore should not take up too much time nor be too difficult" Gladman (1885:164). The final suggested disadvantage of home lessons was that if pupils were undertaking home lessons that there should be "careful examination" and "careful correction of mistakes". Marking should be thorough and time taken over it so that pupils can correct any mistakes they had made. Gladman also quoted Dr Crichton Browne's The School Guardian article of 1884 as an example of the problems associated with home lessons. Gladman suggested that home lessons were written on the blackboard during the last half hour of the morning session and that marking should take place during the corresponding lesson the next day and that time should be devoted to this. Gladman also suggested the subject for home lessons and that "As a rule, there should be something to learn, and something to write; something to prepare, and something by way of recapitulation" Gladman (1885:165). Every pupil had a reading book and this was used at home for memorising extracts, copying words and learning to spell words. Independent writing was encouraged and arithmetic was expected to be completed every evening. Map drawing was used as preparation for the geography lesson the following day and texts learned by

heart and tested by the teacher. Preparation for history lessons was along similar lines with the lessons based on the work prepared the previous night as home lessons. Difficult aspects of grammar were first undertaken at school before pupils could attempt them as home lessons and these included identifying nouns, verbs or adjectives on a given page in a text book. Gladman suggested that teachers should plan home lessons each week allotting time for each subject. Sanctions for non-completion of home lessons was also suggested and detention was the recommend course of action "requiring delinquents to complete what they have neglected to do" Gladman (1885:166).

"It should be known, however, that teachers have no right to enforce the preparation of lessons at home, however desirable such preparation may be. Teachers would therefore do well to have a friendly understanding with parents when admitting children to their school."

(Gladman, 1885 p166)

Following the 1891 Elementary Education Act primary education was to be provided free for all. Two years later in the 1893 Elementary (School Attendance) Act the school leaving age was raised to eleven years and this was raised again in 1899 to twelve years. This compulsory attendance of children between the ages of five and twelve years put an added strain on some poorer families who relied on the children to go out to work. Although Attendance Officers were employed they found it difficult to enforce attendance. Children under the age of thirteen could only be employed if they could demonstrate that they had reached the required educational standards.

It was this 1899 Board of Education Act that established the Board of Education, the government department with responsibility for education. Politically there was an indication of structure in education

According to Bolton (2012) in 1900 there were 34,300 elementary schools with an average of 154 pupils in each and an aggregate attendance of 5.3 million pupils. The pupil to teacher ratio was 42:1. The average annual salary of a male teacher was £128 and for a female teacher was £86 and the education budget was 5.9 per cent of the central government revenue.

2.3 Homework in England after 1902

During the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century a number of proposals and acts were put forward by the governments of the time. Firstly, under the conservative government, the Arthur Balfour Education Act 1902 abolished the 2,568 school boards and set up 328 Local Education Authorities (LEA) to oversee education in their areas. The LEAs could establish and develop technical, secondary and the existing elementary schools. It would be their responsibility to pay teachers, ensure teachers were qualified and provide teaching and learning resources. Although secondary schools were being established in the form of grammar schools or county secondary schools children still attended elementary schools until they left at thirteen years of age to start work.

In 1905 there were 35,083 primary or elementary schools with 5,940,000 pupils attending and 157,000 full time teachers. The average was 169 pupils per school and the pupil to teacher ratio was 37:9. There were 630 secondary schools with 113,000 pupils attending and with an average per school of 179 pupils. There were no figures available for how many teachers were in secondary schools at the time. As stated in the Board of Education, Acland Report, 1909 cited in Gillard (2011) it was estimated that there were

590,768 children between the ages of twelve and thirteen, 402,350 between thirteen and fourteen and 61,820 between fourteen and fifteen attending elementary schools who could be attending secondary schools. It was also estimated in the report that of the children eligible to attend school 99.2 per cent between the ages of eleven and twelve, 87.64 per cent between twelve and fourteen years of age and only 25.91 per cent between the ages of fourteen and seventeen were attending.

In 1907 Robert Morant, Board of Education Permanent Secretary, appointed George Newman to the position of Chief Medical officer to the Board of Education to oversee the health of children in school. Morant had been concerned that some children were not able to take full advantage of the education offered to them due to the lack of food, so he gave the LEAs the power to provide school meals for those children affected. The following year school doctors reported that 70 per cent of children inspected were dirty and many had defects of eyes, throat and teeth Martin (1979). Schools were not only taking on the education of children but also the health and welfare of them too.

From 1907, under the free place scheme and scholarships, more children could attend grammar schools and those who failed the entrance exam at the age of eleven or twelve would attend a central school where a more practical education was offered.

The Liberal government of David Lloyd George introduced two education Acts. The Education Act 1918 took onboard some recommendations made by the Lewis report in 1917 and raised the school leaving age from twelve to fourteen.

Following the First World War this act of 1918 was welcomed and aimed to "repair the war's intellectual wastage" and to limit "industrial pressure on the child life of this country" Martin (1979:86). According to Martin, the Act claimed that "ordinary families valued education not merely to help earn more but because *"they know that in the treasures of the mind they can find... a refuge from the necessary hardships of a life spend in the midst of clanging machinery."*

The Education Act 1921 consolidated the leaving age at fourteen years and the local education authorities were given the duty to enforce this. The leaving age would rise again following the Education Act 1936 to fifteen years. At this time very few were entitled to a discrete secondary education as more were attending straight through schools.

By 1924 secondary schools were still for the minority. Martin (1979) stated that Public schools were charging around £250 per year and grammar schools £13 per year, although 25 per cent of grammar school pupils were scholarship winners, this meant that in some grammar schools two thirds of their pupils were from the lower-middle class. In 1924 the number of free places to grammar schools was increased as the government saw the need to for more "white collared" workers.

In 1925 there were 35,901 primary or elementary schools and 1,602 secondary schools with 5,683,000 pupils in primary or elementary schools and 510,00 in secondary schools. There were 187,000 teachers in primary or elementary schools (pupil to staff ratio 30.4:1) and 25,000 in secondary schools (pupil to staff ratio 20.3:1) Bolton (2012).

Hallam (2004) explains that one of the first investigations into homework was conducted during the time of a conservative government by the West Kent

Branch of the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters. This survey was carried out in January 1928 and published in October of the same year in response to public debate in that there were no official statistics relating to homework. Gordon (1980) described how 355 replies were received from questionnaires which had been distributed to 225 secondary schools, although the report does not say where these schools were located only that they were either boys' schools or mixed schools. The study showed the range and amount of homework set and also the lack of policy to support it. The amount of homework set for boys of eleven years of age varied from one to twelve hours each week. Over eleven years of age it ranged between 7.5 and twenty hours each week. The report on this survey showed that many teachers were uneasy about the system of homework and that homework should be regulated. The report also stated that the home environment and social conditions should be taken in to consideration. Many parents who had responded to the questionnaire expressed their concern that they were not consulted about the amount of homework set and they were not invited express their opinion in relation to the effects of homework on their children and families. Following this research the Times Education Supplement published a special article on the 19 January 1929 asking the question "Is homework necessary?" (Appendix 8). This article was written following the annual general meeting of the Assistant Masters' Association at which a resolution was carried.

"While affirming the value and necessity of homework
as a means of study free from the restriction of class work,
it should be limited in amount and definitely apportioned
among the various subjects."

(The Times Educational Supplement, 1929)

The article explained that parents welcomed the discussion raised by the Assistant Masters' Association and the resolution, as up to that point teachers had appeared to show a "contemptuous or supercilious attitude" when the issue of the abolition of homework was raised.

The article makes clear that the defenders of homework had a number of arguments to keep it. They saw homework as valuable as long as home conditions supported it and the child was healthy and not overburdened. It did however ask the question "is it necessary for the child's training or in order for that child to pass an exam?". The defenders also argued that the school syllabus could not be covered during the school day and therefore homework had to be set in order to meet the demands of the syllabus and to pass the school certificate examination. Here the argument is again raised whether the curriculum is suitable.

"If the examinations are of such a standard that success in them involves several years of systematic overworking, then the proper course is not to pile on homework, but to work for a complete remodelling of the examination system."

(The Times Educational Supplement, 1929)

A third argument was around repetition and that a certain amount of repetition of work could be carried out at home without the teacher supervising. This repetition would take the form of memorising and practising what was learnt so that the time in school could be used to acquire new skills and knowledge. Another argument put forward by those defending homework was that after tea a child was refreshed having completed a day at school and travelled home and would therefore be able to continue working. This did not however take into consideration the social conditions or the home environment.

Arguments against homework were just as strong. Psychologists of the time saw that five and a half hours in school was long enough for growing children. Although they did not say what this figure was based on. Parents argued that those children with some distance to travel to and from school would be missing out on valuable family life and social interaction at home. Not all children would be fortunate in their home environment and for some, completing homework at home would be very difficult. Again the discussion around the home environment was taking place and whether the child had a quiet place to work at home. Another argument identified in the article was concerned with the health of children. Homework was seen as putting too much strain on "delicate" or "backward" children causing some to have sleepless nights and nervous problems. However there was no evidence to support this, only newspaper correspondence, but once again the social welfare of the child was being discussed. The article asked the question "Is there a case for its abolition?" and was it for the convenience of schools or for pupils to make progress? If homework had to be given by teachers in order for the children to achieve a certain standard then why was the examination system not remodelled? The article concluded that homework had to have an educational value if it was to take time out of children's family life. The welfare of the child was once again raised.

According to Hansard, on 11 December 1934, Edmund Radford the Conservative MP for Manchester Rusholme asked the Conservative Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Herwald Ramsbotham, whether he would set up a committee to look into homework. He had concerns over the excessive amount of homework some children were receiving. The reply came that excessive homework was a matter best left to local education authorities, governing bodies, teachers and school inspectors. This survey was to take three years to complete and would be published as Board of Education Educational Pamphlet no. 110 in 1937.

On 3 July 1935, during a Parliamentary debate, the Ministry of Health, Fielding Reginald West (Labour MP for Hammersmith North) asked Sir Hilton Young, the Conservative Minister of Health and MP for Sevenoaks, how children could do their homework in homes where there was no sanitary conveniences and water had to be carried up three or four storeys. The Minister of Health did not give a specific reply to this but discussion took place about sanitary conditions in homes and the social conditions children were living in.

The Assistant Mistresses Association reported in the Times Education Supplement on 13 April 1935 (Appendix 9) that following questionnaires sent to schools the association's education committee found that again there was an issue surrounding homework. The concerns of the association centred on the necessity for the cooperation between the school and home and the most effective ways of setting homework. It was also concerned about accommodating after school sessions for children to complete their homework as their home conditions were not suitable for the work to be carried out there. This would increase the work load for teachers so that they would be less fresh and their teaching would suffer. The same environment issues raised fifty years after Crichton-Browne writing in *The School Guardian*. Discussion was now not only concerning the welfare of the child but also the welfare of the teacher.

Homework and the effect on children was again brought up in Parliament in February 1936 when Radford tabled a motion to the House of Commons and resolved.

"That in the opinion of this House, it is undesirable that school children should have their evenings occupied with homework,

to the exclusion of rest and recreation; and that, whenever practicable, preparation on the school premises should be substituted for homework."

(Hansard,1936 col. 1045)

Edmund Radford once again declared "that homework is as unpopular with parents as it is with pupils" in the Children's Newspaper in February 1936, and in response to this, the President of the Board of Education stated that an official inquiry was in progress. The findings of this inquiry were published in the Board of Education Educational Pamphlet no. 110 in 1937. The survey had taken three years to complete and had investigated issues around the homework tasks set, and the time spent on homework. In total 290 schools were involved in the 1935 survey including secondary schools, technical schools and elementary schools in all areas of the country including rural and urban. Questionnaires were sent to parents, and views of head teachers were taken from the discussion at their Annual General Meeting. The report stated in its conclusion and recommendations that all pupils should have time after school for leisure activities, recreation and fresh air without losing time for sleep. There was no evidence in elementary schools that homework was set because there was not enough time during the school day to complete all the necessary work, however, it was felt by both parents and schools involved in the survey that due to the pressures of the Scholarship or School Certificate examinations extra work was needed to be carried out. Therefore the recommendation was to change the examination system. In secondary schools the report identified some defects including the lack of control by head teachers of the type of task, the time required to spend on it, parents not cooperating and there were, once again, unsuitable home and social conditions. The report went on to say that the most drastic remedy to all of this would be to abolish homework completely. The report also gave arguments for homework and these included the fact that pupils would be

living in a competitive economic world and in order to compete they would need to have well trained intelligence and the development of self-reliance and initiative. The report recommended that the head teacher ensured that all teachers gave the right amount of homework and that subject teachers were to set suitable tasks. These tasks were classified as practising the work carried out in class, memorising work, for example, poems or facts, revision and preparation, and that they should not involve too much writing. Schools should gain the support of parents and may undertake this by involving parents' associations. This showed that parents were seen as a key partner in the issue of homework.

Following the publication of this report on the 14 June 1937, homework was again discussed in Parliament during the debate of the Board of Education. Hansard (1937) stated that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Kenneth Lindsay, Labour MP for Kilmarlock, referred to the 1931 Hadow Report on 'The Primary School' and to a report issued after a previous debate on 12 February 1936. A recommendation from this report was that pupils under the age of twelve years should not have any homework and that if homework was set it was limited to only four nights each week. A second recommendation was that for those pupils between the ages of twelve and fourteen years, homework should not exceed one hour each night and after fourteen years should be limited to one and a half hours each night. Mr Pierce Creagh Loftus, the Conservative MP for Lowestoft, actually questioned the need for homework at all as there were no examinations in elementary schools for children between the ages of eleven and fourteen years. Lindsay responded by saying that the elimination of examinations may not remove the need for homework. The MP for Kilmarlock went on to say that independent study and working alone was valuable, as was the support given by parents. It was not the amount of homework but the type of homework that was important and that teachers should be setting imaginative work. Hastings

Lees-Smith, Labour MP for Keighly and former President of the Board of Education, commented that excessive homework was spreading into junior schools due to the competition amongst children and parents and therefore depriving them of their childhood and social activities. As long as this system continued then pressure on children would continue. Lees-Smith also stated that there was little point in reports on homework telling children to do less homework as parents insisted on it and that pupils, teachers, parents and school administrators were “prisoners of the same system”. The debate on 14 June 1937 continued with no solution to the issue of homework.

Although the report stated recommendations, this was, once again, not put into practice. However, as a result of this survey some schools and Boards of Education (London County Council, 1937) set up the early foundations of homework clubs and in some schools reduced the amount of homework. This illustrated that some local authorities were taking a lead on this as they were aware of the problems associated with pupils completing homework at home and were attempting to address and respond to these issues. The report yet again opened up the discussion on homework which included teaching unions who canvassed their members and held conferences on the subject and the educational media writing about it.

The 1937 report and the subsequent discussion in Parliament clearly illustrated the debate taking place in relation to homework and the themes of social needs and the home environment of the pupils, the educational value of homework and the place of homework in the academic success of the pupils. Once again, no political party would make a decision about homework but they are leaving it to schools and local authorities based on recommendations.

In 1938 Will Spens chaired the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education, a section of the report focussed on homework. The report explained that homework was carried out in all schools to a greater or lesser degree and pupils in day schools were encountering problems in completing homework due a range of social and cultural backgrounds, the distances they travelled to and from school and by distractions at home from the "wireless". The report stated that some of these problems could be overcome by "sympathetic support" from parents. The report made reference to 1937 Board of Education Educational Pamphlet no. 110 in confirming the necessity of homework in supporting the school curriculum and the work carried out in school and that it was possible to regulate homework to secure the achievement of academic results without encroaching on pupils' home life. This regulation of homework included the suggestion of different teachers setting homework on different nights and that a tutorial system in a school would monitor this. The amount of homework set should be differentiated according to the age group, no additional homework should be set over the weekend so that pupils could spend time with their families. It also stated that one evening during the week should be homework free so that the pupil could refresh and be able to give full attention to homework on the other evenings. The report also considered the home environment and the social conditions the pupils lived in and suggested that teachers should take these factors into account. The report also suggested that there should be a National Curriculum although this was not going to be implemented for another fifty years.

Scorgie (1938) cited in Gordon (1990) highlighted the fact that discussion around homework was still not evidence based and that this should change.

"Homework deserves, because of its importance, to be the great topic of Press and conversation that it is. But it deserves

better. It should be the subject of investigation as scientific and objective as possible, not merely popular or professional oratory.”

(Scrogie, 1938 p 513 cited in Gordon, 1980)

In 1940 the new Conservative-led Coalition Government Board of Education led by Ramsbotham proposed changes to education in a Green Book “Education after the War” (Gillard, 2011). Proposals in the Green Paper were to form the basis of the future 1944 Education Act. These included abolishing elementary schools and to have three stages of education, primary, secondary and further education.

2.4 Homework in England after 1944

Eleanor Wilkinson as Minister of Education in the Labour government introduced the 1944 Education Act, also known as the Butler Act after R. A. Butler, the President of the Board of Education. The Act included universal free education and included the split between primary and secondary education at the age of eleven, with the school leaving age rising to fifteen. The scholarship exam was replaced by the eleven plus exam and those who passed the eleven plus attended a grammar school and were regarded as the more gifted students, while others attended the secondary modern school. This consolidated the opportunity for students to attend grammar schools on merit rather than on income. The Act also replaced the Board of Education with the Ministry of Education. This Tripartite Education System had first been suggested in the 1943 Norwood Report when three different types of curriculum had been identified to suit needs of the pupils. Secondary education was to include three different types of schools, grammar, secondary modern and technical. The curriculum at these schools up to the age of thirteen should be similar to enable transfer to take place should it be necessary. It was envisaged that academically minded pupils would attend grammar schools, scientifically minded would attend technical schools and

the rest would attend secondary modern schools and these schools would support pupils in employment related work. However, due to the cost involved in this, very few technical schools were established so pupils, after taking the eleven plus exam, transferred from primary schools to either grammar schools or secondary modern schools. Education was now freely available, with no discrimination to boys and girls equally from all social backgrounds. In 1947 following the establishment of secondary modern schools in 1944 a survey was conducted entitled "Children out of School". The survey by Ward (1948) as cited in Hallam (2004) explained that homework continued to vary between schools with those boys in grammar schools being set and completing more homework than those in secondary modern schools and that this was an acceptable part of the curriculum. The 1947 survey showed that 24 per cent of secondary modern boys were set one hour of homework each evening with 5 per cent set more than the hour and 71 per cent set no homework. Those surveyed in grammar schools showed 43 per cent set one hour of homework each evening, 55 per cent set more than one hour and 2 per cent set no homework. This led to local authorities questioning what advice should be given to headmasters on homework (Gordon, 1980). Academically the UK had to be able to compete with the rest of the world. However, socially, there was a widening lifestyle gap between secondary modern students and those attending grammar schools.

By 1955 there were 3,500 secondary modern schools, 1,180 grammar schools, 302 technical schools and sixteen comprehensive schools (ninety-six schools were listed as other) totalling 5,144 schools. Attending these schools were 1,914,000 pupils and the estimated percentage of pupils at the time achieving the equivalent of five A* to C grades or O level grades was 10.7 per cent compared with 2012 of 81.1 per cent, Bolton (2012).

In 1963 the Central Advisory Council (Ministry of Education 1963) advised

“Some form of 'homework' - liberally interpreted - should be required of all pupils.”

(Ministry of Education, 1963 p51)

The Council, chaired by John Newsom, the Scottish born educationalist, also advised that all children would benefit from work outside school in the form of homework. In particular the less able students would benefit from homework in the final two years at school. To support the less able students the Council suggested that extra resources would be needed which included quiet rooms, public libraries and staffing. The 1963 report by John Newsom, also known as "Half our Future", went in to detail about the type of work which could be completed outside school and the benefits of it. The recurring theme of environmental conditions appeared when the report also stated...

"[...]especially of schools in difficult urban areas, leave us in no doubt at all that under the conditions in which some families are obliged to live, it is asking the impossible of parents and of children to expect homework to be done satisfactorily.

Even where housing conditions are good, large families and small living rooms, or the open-plan design of many modern houses and flats, may make it extremely difficult for boys and girls to have reasonable privacy and quiet in which to concentrate on their work."

(Ministry of Education, 1963 p42)

The Labour Government Circular 10/65, issued in 1965 by the Department of Education and Science, requested Local Education Authorities to move away from the grammar school and secondary modern school model of education

and introduced the comprehensive education system. The 1968 Education Act laid down the rules outlining the comprehensive system. However in 1970 when the Conservative government came back into power, under Edward Heath with Margaret Thatcher as Secretary of State for Education, it withdrew the pressure to become comprehensive and allowed the Local Education Authorities to determine the future of secondary education under their control.

The Education Act 1964 was introduced on the 31 July by the Conservative Minister of Education, Sir Edward Boyle. A year earlier the Chief Education Officer for the West Riding of Yorkshire, Sir Alec Clegg proposed the introduction of middle schools and the organisation of schools into three tiers based on age five to nine years, nine to thirteen years and thirteen to eighteen years. The middle schools were established to take the pressure off the overcrowding of upper schools rather than for an academic benefit. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the three tiers were introduced by many Local Education Authorities. By 1983 there were 1400 middle schools in the country but this started to decline after the Plowden report in 1967 when there was a focus on primary education, to just 163 middle schools in 2014.

The Plowden report was published in 1967. This report was instigated by the Sir Edward Boyle, the Conservative Government Minister of Education, in 1963 when he asked the Central Advisory Council of Education in England to investigate primary education and the transition into secondary schools. This was to be the first report on primary education since the Hadow Report of 1931. The report was chaired by Bridget Plowden and reported to Anthony Crosland, the Labour Government Secretary of State for Education and Science, in 1966. The recommendations from the report included parents having more choice in their children's primary school, more contact with home and the involvement of parents in the school. The ratio of teachers to

students should be increased and class sizes reduced with an increase in teachers' aides and more male teachers. Primary education should be surveyed every ten years and local authority advisers appointed with specific knowledge of primary education. There should be nursery provision available for children for the year before they start school and children should start school the September following their fifth birthday. There should be a three year course in the first school (infant school) and a four year course in their second school (junior or middle school). The curriculum should involve individual group and whole class work.

From the 1880s through to the 1960s homework was debated by a range of interested groups including social reformers and the government. Although a number of changes had taken place including introducing the comprehensive education system and the National Curriculum the homework debate continued.

2.5 Research into Homework from 1980

Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government came into power in May 1979 and introduced the 1979 Education Act which removed the previous government's requirements that all schools should become comprehensive and gave greater parental choice in the allocation of school places. The Conservative government's Education Act of 1980 gave more power to parents including increased power on governing bodies and the right to choose the schools for their children to attend. At least two parents were to be on school governing body and parents had the right of appeal if their child did not get into the school of their choice.

1980 was a milestone in education as the Education Act resulted in educational research and in a number of educational reports. However, research now took a different focus, as Scrogie had pointed out forty years

earlier, and became evidence based and not rhetoric, however some could not be evidenced as it was conducted in the home environment. The Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) commissioned a number of reports which are discussed below.

During 1985 and 1986 Her Majesty's Inspectors surveyed state and independent schools, primary, middle and upper. Information on homework was gathered from 243 state schools and eight independent schools and this information was collected when the inspectors routinely visited the schools. The information was collected from school brochures, school policies, and subject and department documents and through discussion with parents. One problem encountered by the investigating team was that as the work was carried out away from school it was difficult to observe homework being completed and the type of home environment. The DES (1987) reported that all children would experience some form of homework during their time at school, some experiencing it in primary and others starting to experience it when they got to secondary schools. The type and amount of homework varied from school to school and in different age groups. The report stated that properly designed homework could play a valuable part of the education of the child and when added up through their school life can amount to a considerable period of time. The academic purpose of homework was raised and showed that it was a required element of the curriculum to increase results.

The DES (1987) summarised their findings and recommended that homework needed to be considered in relation to teaching and learning in each school. The DES (1987) stated that homework was set in schools. However, due to the fact that homework was carried outside the school environment it was difficult to set appropriate homework for all students to complete due to their

differing home and social conditions. The report did state that research in the UK and elsewhere had shown that regular setting and marking of homework did support good education and schools. Homework should be part of the general curriculum rather than a standalone activity. Homework should be a planned activity and the report suggested that if homework was structured in this way it would be seen as having a purpose and being relevant. Successful homework was related to quality rather than the quantity set and should be flexible as opposed to a regimented approach. The survey suggested that the potential of homework was not being exploited and that the Local Education Authorities should give guidance to schools on the need for a homework policy however this policy was not going to be statutory.

However, if the homework environment cannot be controlled why are schools setting homework and expecting all students to complete it?

The Education Reform Act of 1988 is regarded as the most important education act since 1944 and sometimes referred to as the “Baker Act” named after the Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, (Gillard, 2011). This Act took power away from Local Education Authorities and gave more power to schools. One of main parts of the Act was on the introduction and development of the National Curriculum, Key Stages and the start of national testing, the Standard Assessment Test (SATs), at ages seven, eleven and fourteen. League tables were introduced showing school performance and parents were able to specify which school was their preferred choice.

In 2001, Ofsted commissioned a review by Sharp, Keys and Benfield to look at the literature which had been published before and after 1988. This systematic literature review looked at research based literature in the English language published between January 1988 and December 2000. Ofsted

requested that the review focussed on school practice including policy, planning, checking, marking and feedback, impact on students including attitudes to study, academic progress and the amount spent on homework, the home environment and support given by parents, what impact this had on teachers, homework clubs and the resources needed and available to support homework. This review went on to inform policy and practice. Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) described ten common purposes of homework (“the ten P’s”) Practice, Preparation, Participation, Personal Development, Peer interactions, Parent-Child relations, Parent-Teacher communication, Public relations, Policy and Punishment. These purposes of homework were identified by Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) from a range of surveys and interviews conducted with teachers (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1988; Epstein & Becker, 1982), from reviews of research (Cooper, 1989; Paschal *et al.*, 1984), from recent studies (Corno, 2000; Muhlenbruck, Cooper, Nye,&Lindsay, 2000), and from workshops (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2000)).

Investigation into student perceptions of homework was carried out by MacBeath and Turner (1990) in a study of thirteen Scottish schools, seven primary and six secondary schools. The schools selected were classed as typical schools and included schools in a mining village, a new town, in an affluent city suburb, an area of social deprivation and a school in a remote highland area. The study also included denominational and non-denominational schools and those with a high level of parental involvement and those with little parental involvement. The study looked at homework from the perception of three main stake holders; students, teachers and parents. Those involved in the study were either interviewed, completed questionnaires or completed diaries. Although the Scottish system of education is different to the English education system some issues are common to both. While discussing homework, MacBeath and Turner explained that it was a controversial social issue

"Because homework goes home, and goes home to such a variety of social contexts, it is almost impossible to determine what will influence the child in a positive or negative way and whether work done without teacher supervision will benefit or harm motivation and learning."

(MacBeath and Turner, 1990 pg 6)

One aspect of homework investigated was the purpose of homework. The students saw the purpose of homework as reinforcement, helping them to learn more and to finish any work not completed in class. The teachers saw it as the link between home and school as well as reinforcement. They also saw the purpose of homework as being extension activities and developing good educational, study and independent skills. Parents saw the main purpose as being reinforcement. The study showed that parents and teachers had a common belief with regards to the value of homework while students valued it when it was well explained, they were given time to complete it, it was interesting and varied and it was differentiated. It was reported that secondary aged students were given too much homework and were not supported in managing this, some of which was a lack of communication between departments and therefore setting homework on the same day. Therefore, having a timetable was seen as important. Students usually completed homework alone and the suggestion was that it could be made more collaborative and could include activities for parents to be involved in and therefore, supporting their children. Parents should be involved in a monitoring role in addition to supporting and helping their children and a school's credibility with the community was often judged by the approach to homework. Many teachers questioned during the investigation stated that they would retain sanctions for non-completion of homework, however, this could be avoided by better support and guidance in school.

The study summarised the findings by stating that the successful patterns of homework were those which built on the work carried out in the classroom and prepared for future work. Students needed to see the purpose of it and that it was well planned, and was supported by both teachers and parents. When writing a homework policy all three stakeholders should be involved in the formulation and the monitoring of it.

In 1992 under the Education (Schools) Act during the Conservative government of John Major, Her Majesty's Inspectorate was replaced by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Their remit was to inspect all state schools on a regular four yearly basis to improve the quality and standards in education and grade schools on a seven point scale from one, outstanding, to seven, very poor. In 1994 Her Majesty's Inspectors carried out a review of homework policy and practice in schools, Ofsted (1995). Visits to nineteen schools were carried out in the summer and autumn terms and questionnaires were received from another fifty-eight schools. In addition to schools the local authority was also visited to look at the support given to study outside school. The main findings showed that most schools set homework and the reasons given for setting homework included extending the curriculum covered in lesson time and to improve study skills. The investigation found that when homework was set it was effective and that both students and parents saw the value of it and how it supported work carried out in school. However parents were at times concerned over the consistency of the practice within the school. Schools stated that the main benefits of homework were improving student attitude and developed independent learning to support higher standards. The review found that most of the schools involved in the study had a written statement about homework, including a policy statement stating the purpose of homework. This included guidance over the procedures for setting and marking. These policies were reviewed and some schools revised their policies based on their

experience and in some cases increased the homework set when faced with pressure from parents. The findings also showed that although senior staff and governors wrote the policy they did not consistently monitor the implementation of the homework policy. It was left to class teachers to set, mark and monitor homework. This was monitored in turn by the head of department. Many schools gave students homework diaries so that homework could be monitored by teachers and parents. These would be signed by parents and monitored by the form tutor. Recommendations from this study stated that all stakeholders should be involved in policy setting over homework and that the policy should refer to the purpose of homework, the responsibilities of all involved, the activities set and the time to be spent on completing them and how it would be marked and monitored. However having a homework policy was still not statutory and the same recommendations were again brought up which indicated that schools were not taking on board what had been suggested in the past.

Following the investigation carried out in 1994, Ofsted (1995) recommended that in order to raise achievement and reach full potential, schools should review the place of homework. Although it was not statutory for schools to have a homework policy, Ofsted (1995) suggested that schools should regularly review the management of homework in the curriculum. Ofsted also stated that all stakeholders should be involved in writing the school homework policy and take in to account the type of homework tasks, give guidelines about the amount of time to be spent on homework, how the homework would be assessed and how homework would be monitored. Therefore giving both parents and teachers some control over the homework set and that it was completed. Teachers needed to include homework in the curriculum and should match it to the ability of the students including a variety of homework strategies. Teachers should also provide students with appropriate feedback so that progress could be made.

Home-School Agreements

At the Labour Party Conference in October 1994 the Policy Statement on Education "Opening doors to a learning society" was introduced. The policy attributed to the previous Shadow Education Secretary, Ann Taylor, outlined the Labour Party's new ideas on comprehensive education. These included attendance, timekeeping, homework standards and home-school agreements. While still in opposition Tony Blair, the leader of "New Labour", gave a number of lectures and speeches about education and spoke about home-school agreements or contracts. These included his "Spectator Lecture" on the 22 March 1995 entitled "The rights we enjoy and duties we owe" and a speech at Ruskin College, Oxford on 16 December 1996 outlining his vision, including education, and spoke of the important role parents make saying "Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. That is why we have put such stress on home-school contracts".

On 2 May 1997 Tony Blair took office as Prime Minister. One month later on Monday 2 June he made his "The Will to Win" speech at the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, London. This was his first speech as Prime Minister and he set out his vision for education.

"[...] parents will have to play their part too: home-school contracts will be made compulsory in all schools. Why are we so keen to raise standards in our schools? Because the quickest route to the workless class is to fail your English and maths class. In today's world, the more you learn, the more you earn."

(Blair, 1997)

A year later Tony Blair's government, under David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, introduced home-school contracts. Under sections 110 and 111 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, the governing body of every maintained school was required to adopt a home-school agreement or contract. In this agreement the school had to state the school's aims and values, their responsibilities, what was expected of the parents and of the students? The Act also stated that the home-school agreement should be drawn up in consultation with parents. Governing bodies were also to make reasonable measures to ensure that parents and carers signed the agreement. However, as this was launched to develop relationships between home and school rather than a legal contract, no action would be taken if there was a breach in terms by either parents or schools. It was suggested that if there were any concerns by any party over the agreement then discussions should take place with the head teacher. The aim of the home-school agreement was to promote partnerships between schools and parents through better communication, and in doing so, support the students more effectively.

Following this Act, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) supported schools and parents through the publication in 1998 of two documents. "Home-School Agreements: Guidance for Schools" (DfEE 1998b) and "Home-School Agreements: What Every Parent Should Know" (DfEE 1998c). The first explained what the home-school agreement should contain and how effective it could be. The second described how parents could be involved in the agreement. It explained that the home-school agreement should contain the aims and values of the school and what the responsibilities of the school and parents should have. It explained that students achieved more when both worked together to support and encourage the student. The DfEE (1998c) explained that homework was important in developing skills and in particular independent learning skills. It

also explained that both the school and parents should be involved in developing the agreement. The Welsh Office (1999) explained why it was important to involve parents

“Parents are a child's first and enduring teachers. They play a crucial role in helping their children learn. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can help more effectively if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help. Home-school agreements provide a framework for the development of such a partnership. The processes involved in introducing and reviewing the agreement will clarify what the school is trying to achieve, and the agreement will set out the role of the school, parents and pupils in this vital partnership.”

(The Welsh Office, 1999. Para 5)

In primary schools, Ofsted (1995) recommended the focus of homework should be on the important skills of literacy and numeracy. Regular reading at home, especially reading with parents, should be encouraged. Older students in primary schools should be given other tasks such as finding out and preparing information as well as traditional writing tasks. At secondary level the guidance suggested that it is the quality of the homework set rather than the time allocated to it.

Homework Guidelines

During the New Labour government of Tony Blair, David Blunkett was the first UK Education Secretary to draw up homework guidelines for every single age group. Although the Department for Education and Employment (1998a) were only giving non-statutory guidelines, they did state that research carried out by Ofsted (1995) showed that an important contribution to student

progress and academic success was homework. These guidelines are still used by schools today.

The guidelines were set down for each age group recommending how much homework should be set. These recommendations were for four and five year olds to have twenty minutes each night rising to two and a half hours each night for sixteen year olds showing progression from primary to secondary school. The guidelines said that homework should be planned so that students had a balance of work through the week and that tasks set could be completed within the given time. Those tasks should be related to class work and were of the right level for the student and not simply finishing off classwork. Homework policies should include information to encourage students to develop the skills needed to enable them to study on their own, to consolidate work undertaken in class, to extend the learning out of the classroom, involve parents and families and manage coursework. The guidelines recognised the fact the some students had responsibilities at home as carers or with weekend work and that mechanisms should be in place to support them in completing their homework. The guidelines also talked about consistency whether it was in setting the homework or in issuing sanctions. Parents and families were expected to support students in giving them space to work, resources or encouragement. The school policy should describe alternative supervised places for students to complete their work. Students should receive prompt and appropriate feedback and school should take this into consideration in the workload of teachers.

In 1998 when the guidelines were introduced, Estelle Morris was a Minister in the Department for Education and Employment under the Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett. In a personal email to the current researcher on 1 March 2015 Estelle Morris stated, when asked about the guidelines, that the reason for the homework policy was to try and raise standards, especially

in disadvantaged communities. Children in the private schools and many schools in middle class areas were regularly set homework and the government wanted to make sure everyone could benefit from this extra learning. The government also allocated quite a lot of resources into homework clubs and after school learning as they appreciated that some children did not have the facilities at home. The home school partnership was seen as a way of involving parents in their child's education and encouraging them to work with their child's school. The details were usually put in guidelines rather than primary legislation as guidance can be statutory and non-statutory and gave an opportunity to give more detail and could be easily amended. Giving guidance on non-statutory aspects was helpful for those who were choosing to implement a policy.

2.6 Research into Homework from 1997

Weston (1999) reported that the study carried out for Ofsted following the 1997 White Paper "Excellence in Schools" suggested that homework was not an optional extra but an essential element of good education that supported students to reach higher standards. In preparing this report Weston collected evidence from primary and secondary schools inspected under the new inspection framework since June 1996 where homework, and teaching and learning were identified as good practice. Evidence was collected through 368 telephone surveys, twenty-nine case studies, questionnaires from twenty-nine schools, research conducted by the National Foundation for Education Research and the consultation on the 1997 White Paper. The study covered a number of different issues relating to homework including school policies, the amount of homework set and the time spent completing it, the types of tasks set, assessment and feedback, any resources needed, how homework relates to class work, student motivation and the use of homework clubs. The report also highlighted the roles and responsibilities of both the school and parents. When looking at the future of homework the study pointed out a

number of key factors including family patterns, resources, adults other than teachers, learning to learn and government policy. The study saw that family patterns had changed and parents were not always available to support their children with their homework. Resources had changed and text books were no longer the mainstay of educational resources and more emphasis was being put on ICT and not all had access to it. More adults were involved in learning including support assistants in the classroom and adults from business and the community. Independent learning was something which needed to be developed in the context of learning to learn. The government still saw the issue of homework as a school matter, however, guidelines had been set down to promote common principles and practice. The study saw teachers as the centre of the homework process as they had the expertise and responsibility for the development of the student. The study identified indicators of good practice in each of the areas of the investigation. As far as the scope and purpose of homework was concerned all stakeholders should agree on the definition of homework and the purposes should be explicit with clear guidelines drawn up for specific groups and age ranges. The homework policy should be clear and related to the school aims and all of this should be communicated with all other parties through a variety of ways. The indicators of good practice for homework and effective learning for secondary schools suggested that schemes of work should include homework tasks complimenting classwork. These tasks should be varied, balanced, differentiated and marking criteria should be shared with the students so that they are aware of the assessment. Feedback should be prompt and include advice on how to improve. Parents should be informed about the homework planned and on the progress of their children. As the students progressed through the school, independent learning skills should be developed including managing tasks and deadlines. Indicators of good practice in managing the homework programme for secondary schools included having a homework policy managed by a senior member of staff. This policy should be

differentiated for different subjects and shared with parents and students. There should be a homework timetable detailing what homework was set, what the learning goals were, what the deadlines were and homework should be structured in order to support students in developing learning skills. There should be regular feedback given by teachers including praise and rewards to motivate the students and any sanctions for non-completion of homework should be clear and that the reasons for not completing homework should be investigated before any sanctions were implemented. Staff and students should have access to the necessary resources in order to set, compete and feedback on tasks set.

Ofsted (1999) reported that effective homework was part of a whole school strategy. The approach to homework should be a collaboration between teachers, parents and students. Key findings of the research study showed this was the best practice in schools and that although schools found that homework was an important aspect of education there was a variation in the type and purpose of homework. Homework should be integrated into the whole curriculum. Not all schools had a homework policy but where this was in place it was well defined and it was agreed by all stakeholders. The findings also showed that the homework set was planned and prepared to support classroom learning. It was also stated that schools saw the importance of parental involvement in homework. Assessment of homework was part of the assessment strategy and showed planning and progression. The study showed that staff were given time and resources to prepare homework. Homework timetables and sanctions were in place and used.

As well as the research carried out by Weston (1999) for Ofsted, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded a research project between 1999 and 2001. The two main aims of the project were to investigate the contribution made by homework and the conditions

surrounding this contribution. Four secondary school and four primary schools in the South West of England were involved in the study. Participants included parents, teachers, head teachers and students. Hughes and Greenhough (2002) summarised the areas of investigation in the report including perspectives, purpose of homework, time and effort involved in it, parental involvement, types of tasks, where and when homework is completed and what help the students received and from whom, the feedback they received and the rewards and punishments.

Hughes (2001) showed that teachers saw homework as part of the extended curriculum which could continue outside the classroom and it gave some students the opportunity to extend their learning, although teachers were aware that many students would not have the environment or resources to achieve this. At the same time as seeing the benefits of homework, teachers also felt under pressure in setting it, whether it was an appropriate task or not, and in following school policy. Parents were in favour of homework when it extended the school curriculum but were not in favour of it when it took time out of family life. Although parents wanted to support their children, many found that some subjects posed more difficulty than others for them to give support and in particular, mathematics. Parents also felt that more time should be spent on homework. Students also had a view on homework with many seeing that it did support their learning and reinforced what was covered in class but for others they saw that it took up their personal time. The main conclusions from the study were that although homework could be seen as beneficial there was some confusion about the benefits of it. Teachers and students would want to see quality rather than quantity in the homework set. Homework did not bridge the gap between home and school as students carried out homework in isolation. Feedback from teachers did not serve the purpose and was unhelpful. Part of the problem was seen as

the type of tasks set as homework. There should be purpose and engagement in the tasks set, homework should be more visible and explicit.

Sharp *et al's* (2001) study was a review commissioned by Ofsted following homework policy and practice guidelines for schools published in 1998 by the DfEE. The review investigated the recent research including studies conducted in the USA. The review looked at a number of key issues and how they affected homework. The keys issues identified were time, students' attitudes, interventions, different types of students, parental involvement and the environment. The review found that although there was some evidence that time spent on homework had a direct bearing on achievement, this evidence should not be taken that spending more time on homework led to higher achievement. Students indicated that they preferred challenging, interesting and varied tasks to complete rather than finishing off class work and that they wanted adequate deadlines in which to complete the work. Those with a positive attitude to homework also had a positive attitude to other aspects of school. The study showed that girls were more willing to complete their homework compared with boys. Although parents wanted schools to set homework they saw it as a conflict between them and their children. Parents were more involved in the homework of younger children and that the culture and socio-economic factors had an effect on some parents. However the review also stated that there was no clear relationship between how much involvement the parents had and the achievement of their children in school and that the homework environment could be influenced by parents providing appropriate conditions for learning. Recommendations were also made for future research. These included research into the cost and benefits to all involved in homework, homework interventions, parental involvement, homework tasks, monitoring, marking and feedback. It was also suggested that there should be studies into technology, attitude and the homework environment.

Although recommendations had been made, Hallam (2004) indicated that schools were still to implement successful policies and practices. Hallam reviewed literature on homework, which included the history of homework, the purpose of homework and effects on attainment. The review also compared UK and international studies. The review included making a case for homework clubs explaining that they could make homework enjoyable as they offered a more suitable environment with resources and supervision. When asking the question "Does homework affect student attainment?" Hallam stated that from the evidence found, there was a certain point when additional homework had no additional benefit. Hallam concluded that the aims of homework tasks needed to be more defined: is the purpose to raise examination attainment or to develop a broad range of skills? Teachers saw the benefits of homework but effective homework needed planning, marking and feedback. Students' perceptions of homework were that it supported their learning, however many felt that it was not related to work carried out in school. They also had concerns that teachers did not always mark or give formative feedback on the work they completed. Parents' view on homework was that it could cause tension at home. These included the involvement of parents in their children's work and that the most positive influence was when parents monitored, supported and provided appropriate resources. Hallam suggested that all stakeholders saw homework as useful in contributing to learning. However the challenge for schools was to develop homework policies and practices to achieve this. Hallam (2004) suggested a model of homework (Appendix 10) proposed by Cowan and Hallam (1999) based on previous investigation into models of homework. The Cowan and Hallam model showed how different factors could influence different attitudes to homework. The model described task, process and outcome and how all involved could be affected and could affect the attitude of the others. Although the homework activity was influenced by the school, the teacher

must take into account the students' needs and access to resources, both in school and at home, including the support at home. Although the model suggested did not include all interactions it did show a broad view of the possibilities.

In 2005, following a decision by one head teacher to abolish homework, Lord Hanningfield asked Lord Filkin, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department for Education and Skills, if the government supported this decision. Lord Filkin replied that although the government saw homework as an essential part of good education and that a good, well organised homework programme supported students in developing skills, it was down to the individual schools to write their own homework policy and that the government had issued non-statutory guidelines Hansard (2005). Again the government of the time would not make a decision on homework in state schools.

Garner (2007) questioned whether children were set too much homework and questioned whether schools should continue to set homework. The positive aspects were seen as developing independent skills and reinforcing classwork, however, negative issues were described as increasing tension at home and putting children off education.

In 2008 Boyle, Bragg and Pearson published their research findings undertaken for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in "Managing Schools Today" Issue 17 volume 3. They concentrated their research on primary schools and interviewed 232 Key Stage two students and 121 parents. The main focus of the research was to look at why homework was set. They asked questions around why homework was set, what were the expectations, did homework support classwork and was homework developing the students as independent learners. Key issues

identified in the study were the philosophy behind setting homework and that teachers generally felt that homework should not be a formal piece of work but should support the learning which took place in the classroom and to encourage the enjoyment of learning. A key concern expressed by the teachers was the completion of homework and whether it was linked to parental support. The study showed that students appeared to recognise the benefits and the purpose of homework. However they did appear to get mixed messages from their teachers as to the benefit and purpose of the homework set. Over half the students surveyed felt that the amount of homework set was about the right amount which for many was once a week. There appeared to be an increase in homework set in preparation for Key Stage Two tests. The survey showed that in some cases when homework was set, it was actually completed at the weekend. Homework also increased in readiness for the transition into secondary school and it was felt that this was positive and prepared the students for more homework in Key Stage Three. There was an expectation that parents would help and support their children in completing homework however when interviewed, parents expressed concern over their ability to help their children. Capability, willingness and time were identified as possibilities for this inability.

The right amount of motivation was identified in the study as important with around half the students interviewed finding the homework interesting. With more and more homework needing the use of a computer those students without access to one at home could be at a disadvantage. Parents also found themselves unable to support their children due to their own lack of ICT skills.

Hattie (2009) analysed research in all aspects of education including homework. Hattie suggested that parents should understand the "language of schooling" so that they were in a better position to support their children with

their homework. The aspirations and expectations of parents also had an effect on their children and their attitude to school work. Hattie also explained that the type of homework set made a difference to homework being completed and that it should motivate the students and support their learning.

"For too many students, homework reinforces what they cannot learn by themselves, and that they cannot do school work. For these students, homework can undermine motivation, internalize incorrect routines and strategies, and reinforce less effective study habits."

(Hattie, 2009 pg 235)

Hattie also stated that unless there was active involvement by teachers, then homework did not contribute to student learning.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement and links to academic achievement was also discussed by Cooper (2007) when describing the positive and negative effects of homework. Four categories of positive effects were described as the immediate achievement and learning, the long term academic effects, the non-academic effects and the greater parental appreciation of and involvement in schooling. Cooper also described the negative effects as being an excess of homework, the denial of access to leisure time and community activities, the parental interference, cheating and increased differences between high and low achievers. In some instances the positive and negative effects overlapped.

In a Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded study undertaken by Solomon *et al* (2002) the tension between students and their parents was investigated and showed there was a cost to the relationship between parents and their

children with little educational value gained from homework. The study was carried out in Rochdale, started in the 1980s and was to continue for twelve years. The original study was not designed to specifically investigate homework but was to include questions regarding employment, income, relationships and family activities but throughout the study homework was often discussed during the interviews. Solomon *et al* (2002) described homework as being central in the relationship between parents and their teenage children and referred to the DfEE Guidelines (DfEE 1998a) suggesting that parental involvement in homework was critical and that schools should have a "learning partnership with parents". The study explained that although the research investigated in preparation for the study showed there were many problems associated with parents involvement in homework there were also benefits, including good communication between school and home. The report concluded by saying that the homework guidelines and the introduction of the home-school agreement did not take into account the complexities of the relationships between school, parents and students. A concern raised was that, although, parents were involved in homework through time and emotional support, they were not involved in influencing the homework agenda. The data showed that there was also a tension in the relationship between the parent and their child over the issue of homework and questioned whether there was anything to be gained from it educationally.

It was noted by La Valle *et al* (2002) in their study about atypical working patterns that this had an effect on how parents supported their children with homework. Parents felt that they wanted to be able to support their children with school activities including homework and to be able to sit and talk to their children about their day but this was not always possible.

Harris *et al* (2009) stated that parents found homework to be the main way of communicating with school and finding out what the children were doing and that by supporting their children with homework they felt up to date with what they were doing in school. Parents also stated that by supporting with homework they were making a positive contribution to the children's progress.

Harris and Goodall (2008) conducted a study in 2007 funded by the Department for Education and Skills and was part of a research project led by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the Association of School and College Leaders. The study collected data from twenty schools and 315 respondents from a range of schools and regions and investigated the barriers to parental engagement. The Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement Project found that there were barriers in the way of parents supporting the children with homework, including social and economic factors. Although both schools and parents saw the value of supporting at home they had differing ideas as to how this support could be undertaken. The study concluded that parental engagement made a difference to student achievement and the school must encourage parental involvement as they were the most important influence on their children.

"there is a major difference between involving parents in schooling and engaging parents in learning. While involving parents in school activities has an important social and community function, it is only the engagement of parents in learning in the home that is most likely to result in a positive difference to learning outcomes."

(Harris and Goodall, 2008 p.277)

Parents, staff and students listed practical ways of support and moral support was the most important for parents and students followed by valuing

education, while better behaviour was most important type of parental engagement for staff followed by moral support. Homework was at the bottom of the list for both parents and staff.

In 2001 the Department for Educational and Skills commissioned the British Market Research Bureau to undertake research on parental involvement. They found that parents were reluctant to engage with homework due to their lack of confidence and understanding of teaching methods.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008b) research paper 'The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Education' stated that there was differing evidence to show the impact on parental involvement but the environment the parents provided for completing homework did have a positive impact. The study carried out in 2007 explained that most children had two main educators involved in their lives, parents and teachers and that both played a crucial role, however there was often no understanding between home and school as to the roles of parents played in the education of their child. Mothers were more likely to help with homework than fathers unless both parents were working in which case both parents supported equally. Parents from non-white ethnic backgrounds were more likely to be supportive of the children's homework. Parental involvement in homework was seen to change as children went through their school life but what was important was the amount or type of homework support. Around 75 per cent of the parents involved in the study stated that helping with homework was crucial. The students surveyed saw that homework was important in supporting their progress in school, especially those who were of secondary age.

TeacherNet was an education website developed by the government department for education the Department for Children, Schools and Families

(DCSF) to support the teaching profession. TeacherNet (2007) explained that effective homework was essential to good education.

"Learning at home is an essential part of good education. Regular homework is important as it gives pupils the opportunity to practice at home the tasks covered in class, and helps the pupils work towards improving important skills. It also helps children and young people to become confident and independent in their learning, which will help throughout their time at school and in adult life."

(TeacherNet, 2007)

Schools should also consider the resources needed for homework and may have to put support in place. Homework should not be standalone activity but an integral part of the curriculum which is recorded and undertaken by students and monitored by parents and carers. TeacherNet went on to describe that effective homework should consider the age and ability of the students, including those with special educational needs and whether the tasks set were manageable. It also described the value of homework and the involvement of parents and carers. Students should not be expected to take longer on their homework than was recommended in the guidelines but may take less time if the homework is useful. The homework timetable should ensure that there was a balance of homework on each day. TeacherNet was decommissioned under the Coalition Government in 2011.

Kohn (2016) stated that he saw homework as an infringement on family time if there was no good reason to set the work. It could drive a wedge between parent and child if the parent is always seen as the enforcer of the completion of homework and thus damage their relationship. He not only stated that less homework should be set but it should not be "the worst type" of completing

worksheets and that it should only be set if the work could be justified. Finally Kohn stated that

"let kids be kids and provide them with time to grow socially,
physically, emotionally and artistically - not just academically."

Kohn (2016)

2.7 Homework in England after 2009

Developments associated with homework after 2009 again are connected to the contemporary political, economic, social and educational context (Hallam, 2004). In September 2010, only six months after coming into power, the Coalition Government produced a White Paper "The Importance of Teaching". Here they set out educational reform in England. The government aimed to raise standards in education by giving more power to teachers and schools to improve discipline, it transformed the curriculum, it introduced more academies and free schools, it changed performance tables, inspection and governance of schools, it set out a different funding system and school led school improvement. This White Paper resulted in the Education Act 2011.

In 2012 Michael Gove, the Coalition Government, Secretary of State for Education, reflecting the Coalition government's deliberate political decision to move decision making and, thus, accountability more to schools, announced that homework guidelines in schools would be dropped and that schools would be given the freedom to decide how much homework was set. With more schools becoming academies and free schools setting up their own policies on all aspects of education in the schools, under the academies act 2010, it had been only state schools working to the government guidelines. Whereas previously it was failing schools which became academies, this Act invited outstanding schools to become academies, and

take control of staffing and the curriculum. *The Telegraph* (2013a) reported an example of the way in which some schools were being flexible in tailoring their approach of homework to their own contexts and the needs of their students. An academy in Norwich, due to open in 2014, was following other academies and was going to extend the school day so that all work was completed in school where students would have access to resources. This would continue to change as all schools had the autonomy to set homework as they saw fit for their students. Some schools have questioned the place of homework in their schools. Another example was the Michaela Community School in North West London. The assistant head was quoted in the Times Educational Supplement in June 2015 stating that the school had decided to "replace...setting, chasing, checking, marking and logging homework with revision, reading and online maths". He went on to state that "For teachers who've got to set, correct, mark, track and chase homework, it's taking time out of lessons". Ofsted (2013a) published "The framework for school inspection" in which it reflected this more flexible and responsive approach to setting homework, it stated that:

"When evaluating the quality of teaching in the school, inspectors will consider the extent to which.... teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework, together with support and intervention, match individual needs."

(Ofsted, 2013a p.18)

Flexibility, however, clearly was accompanied by a renewed focus on additional accountability.

In a similar vein, in a personal email received by the current researcher on March 2015 from Michele Smethurst, ministerial correspondent, on behalf of Nicky Morgan, the Secretary of State for Education at the time, it was stated

that schools were encouraged to develop their own homework policy which should always reflect their circumstances and their students' needs. Every school that sets homework should consider how much time was appropriate for students at each stage, according to their aptitude. The Minister was aware that the amount of time children spent on homework and the type of homework set varied from school to school and depended on a number of factors, including the ages of the students and their levels of ability. The government recognised that homework need not and should not get in the way of other activities that children do after school. Parents should talk to their child's class teacher to discuss any concerns they had about the amount of homework their children received.

The ministerial correspondent went on to say that the government did not collect data on how many schools set homework or how much homework they set. Individual schools were responsible for monitoring, and thus accountable for, their students' progress, school performance and meeting the Ofsted reporting requirements. She also stated that research over a number of years has shown that homework can make an important contribution to students' progress at school.

The correspondent pointed to evidence from research carried out in 2013 that indicated that:

- Students in primary and secondary schools who completed homework generally outperformed students who did not.
- An average student might expect a maximum advantage of five months progress across the school year for completing homework.
- Older students and low achieving students have been found to get most benefit from completing homework.

- Homework helped children to become confident and independent in their learning, which will help throughout their time in school, and in adult life.

The evidence referred to above by the ministerial correspondent was an Ofsted document in 2013 reporting on why most able students were not doing as well as they should in non-selective secondary schools. The investigation was carried out by Ofsted inspectors during inspections of over one hundred schools across the country and included a range of schools. Included in this investigation was the effective use of homework in raising achievement and one of the key findings was that the quality of homework required improvement. The inspectors found that when homework was set it was not routinely monitored marked or feedback given. Students taking part in the investigation stated that they did not feel challenged by the homework set, that it was not interesting and it did not develop any learning skills. The report recommended that schools should evaluate the homework set for their more able students and that it should be challenging them. Homework should be differentiated and give students more opportunity for challenging or open ended tasks including research activities. The more able students should be set homework which was personalised and based on their needs, to motivate and engage them and also to develop their creativity and independence.

Brant and Eskelä-Haapanen (2015) put forward different arguments in the homework discussion. On one hand there has been little correlation between academic achievement and traditional homework and on the other students engaged in reading would be more likely to achieve academically. The practice of traditional homework establishes routines and responsibilities but can also be seen as a chore in completing a pointless activity. Eskelä-Haapanen in particular discussed the amount of homework as being critical

and that every child should have a balance of work, rest and play daily. She also stated that homework should be as reinforcement and not as preparation. Brant and Eskelä-Haapanen stated that schools should support the development of creative students who are flexible, innovative and risk taking and prepared for the Twenty-first century. They also stated that traditional homework could be replaced by free choice and independent work.

Some recent studies have focused on the relationship between social and educational family background and homework. The Sutton Trust was founded in 1997 to improve social mobility through education. The trust has produced a number of reports and some have included how homework has supported social mobility. The Sutton Trust (2009) reported on research carried out by the Universities of Oxford and Durham on how children of graduate parents spent on average twice as much time on homework than those students of non-graduate parents and that children of middle class families were four times more likely to have more than two hundred books in their homes and two and a half times more likely to have access to a computer at home. The 2015b Sutton Report found that homework directly influenced motivation, engagement, independence and developing study skills.

Similarly Wiggins *et al* (2009) conducted a study with around 23000 Year Eleven students from 160 schools using the Year Eleven Information System (YELLIS), and the UK 2000 Time Use Survey with 1000 students. It also collected information related to their socio-economic status, the education level of their parents, the occupation of their parents and the homework completed. The investigation found that there was a correlation between the level of education of the parents and the attitudes of the students to homework but this could be down to the type of schools the students attended in relation to their socio-economic group. Only ten per cent of

students whose parents were educated to university level did not receive any homework. In contrast to this over 60 per cent of children of parents who received little formal education themselves received very little homework. However there was very little difference between the education levels of the parents of those children who completed more homework than they needed to.

In 2013 The Sutton Trust, focussing on effectiveness, produced a Teaching and Learning Toolkit to support and guide teachers and schools on how to use educational resources to improve the attainment of in particular disadvantaged students. Their guidance on secondary school homework stated that on average five months additional progress can be gained when homework is effective. They suggested that the most effective type of homework was short and focused interventions as when homework was routinely set it did not have the same impact. The guidance also suggested that homework should be an integral part of the curriculum rather than an additional piece of work to be completed outside school hours. They suggested time allocated to homework for secondary age students should be between one and two hours per school day and this would change for different age groups. They recommend that any longer homework did not have the same benefits, and in fact, the quality decreases as the length of time on the homework increases. The Toolkit stated that some research had been carried out when homework was given to some groups of students and not to others and they showed that homework could be beneficial. The financial cost of homework was also discussed and this was found to be very low and the only real cost to schools was in staff time for preparation and marking. The suggestions made were that:

- Planned and focused activities are more beneficial than homework which is more

regular but routine or not linked with
what is being learned in class

- The purpose of homework should be explicit to the learners
- It should not be used as a punishment or a penalty for poor performance
- A variety of tasks with different levels of challenge is more likely to be beneficial
- The quality of the homework is more important than the quantity
- Pupils should receive feedback on homework which is specific and timely.

(Higgins *et al*, 2014 pg 18)

The Sutton Trust 2015a report investigated what promoted better achievement for bright, but socio-economic disadvantaged students. The report tracked over 3000 students from preschool to the sixth form comparing their results with students of similar ability but from more advantaged socio-economic groups. One of the key findings stated that those students who spent a substantial amount of time completing homework during the GCSE year were nine times more likely to achieve three A Levels than those students who did not complete regular homework. Homework increased motivation, engagement, study skills and independence and teachers, parents and school policies identified the importance of it. The report also found that bright, but socio-economically disadvantaged boys, and those from white UK backgrounds, needed more attention paid to them to promote learning outside school or additional study in school.

In July 2013 the Department for Education (DfE) published new guidance for local authorities and governing bodies on home-school agreements which

was relevant to homework. The statutory guidance set out the duties of all the governing bodies with respect to sections 110 and 111 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. The DfE (2013) stated, as in the previous guidelines, that the home-school agreement should include the aims and values of the school, the responsibilities towards the students, the responsibilities of the parents and what the schools expected of the students and that the governing body should take reasonable steps to ensure that parents signed the declaration indicating that they understood and accepted the contents of the agreement.

2.8 Current International Comparisons

Comparisons of attitudes across countries from the OECD international perspective have been included in this research. However, it was clear from the interviews with the past and present Secretaries of State for Education that their approach to policy making is entirely English focused and not influenced by international literature and therefore this has not been included.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation that provides an opportunity for governments to share information, experiences and knowledge in order to understand and promote economic, environmental and social wellbeing. They focus on topics affecting directly the everyday lives of people around the world including issues related to, and affecting education. In 1961 the original eighteen European countries, along with the United States and Canada, created an organisation to support development across the world. In 2013 there were thirty-four member countries from North and South America, Europe and Asia and include economically developed and developing countries.

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) was a study of fifteen year old school students' performance in mathematics,

reading and science and has been undertaken every three years since 2000. In 2013 the OECD published a report of a survey carried out in 2012 of the OECD member countries, including the UK. The data collected was analysed and comparisons made between participating countries including a comparison of homework. In December 2014 the OECD published a report "Does homework perpetuate inequities in education?" (OECD 2014) based on the findings of the 2012 survey, which informs the analysis and comparisons this study. The report explained that homework could support learning by helping underachievers or stimulating high achievers but could also cause issues for those who could not complete work in the home environment through lack of space, resources or support. This could also cause a widening gap in the performance between those from different socio-economic backgrounds. On average, a fifteen year old student would spend almost five hours each week completing homework set by their teachers, and although this time varied between countries, it was reported that all countries taking part in the survey assigned homework to that age group. In the UK it was reported that on average five hours was spent on homework compared with fourteen hours in Shanghai-China, over seven hours each week in Ireland, Italy, Romania, the Russian Federation and Singapore and less than three hours each week in Finland and Korea. On average those countries with a high number of hours spent on homework showed a high gap between those students completing homework in socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students. In all participating countries the socio-economically advantaged students spent more time than disadvantaged students on homework. The data showed that between 2003 and 2012 the number of hours spent on homework went down in thirty-one of the thirty-eight countries with comparable data.

Results from this and previous PISA studies showed that those students from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to have space,

resources and support at home to complete homework. However the report also stated that other factors should be taken into account for academic performance including the quality of teaching and the organisation of the school.

"Homework is another opportunity for learning; but it may also reinforce socio-economic disparities in student achievement. Schools and teachers should look for ways to encourage struggling and disadvantaged students to complete their homework. They could, for example, offer to help parents motivate their children to do their homework and provide facilities so that disadvantaged students have a quiet place to complete assigned homework if none is available in their homes."

(OECD, 2014 pg4)

Wheater *et al* (2013) reported that the survey focussed on mathematical knowledge and included homework. 78 per cent of students questioned in England stated that they completed their mathematics homework on time compared with the OECD average of 68 per cent and 72 per cent found mathematics homework hard compared with the OECD average of 56 per cent. When questioned about the stress they felt in completing their homework 28 per cent of the English students said they felt under pressure compared with the OECD average of 33 per cent.

Different countries around the world have different approaches to school work and homework. The countries chosen to discuss below were either close to the UK on the OECD PISA 2012 performance table or near the top of the table. Personal contact was made with education specialists in Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Singapore and the United States. Contact was made with a lecturer in teacher education at an Australian University through

a family friend. An exchange programme has been set up between schools in Denmark and England to share good practice and a visit was undertaken as part of this exchange. The contact in Finland worked in Finnish schools and was trained as a teacher in England. Email correspondence took place with a long standing family friend has recently retired as a lecturer in primary teacher training in France. A deputy head teacher of a school in Singapore visited England in 2014 and discussion took place about schools and education, and this was followed up by email when she returned to Singapore. The contact in the United States was made through the contact in France, he is a lecturer in teacher education. The information collected from these contacts are described in the paragraphs below for each country.

Table 2.1: Comparison of countries from OECD PISA data

Country	Average hours per week of homework	Increase in Students' mathematics points score with an increase of 1 hour per week of homework	Mathematics PISA 2012 Place (65 Countries)	Reading PISA 2012 Place (65 Countries)	Science PISA 2012 Place (65 Countries)	Average PISA 2012 Place (65 Countries)
Singapore	9.4	17	2	3	3	3
Finland	3.5	2	12	6	5	8
Australia	5.5	1	19	13	16	16
UK	4.5	6	26	23	20	23
France	6.5	13	25	21	25	24
Denmark	5.5	4	22	25	27	25
USA	5.5	-2	36	24	28	29

OECD (2014)

School work and homework is approached quite differently between countries. Singapore has an average ranking of third place on the PISA 2012 table and it sets more homework than any other country discussed. Finland, however, sets the least amount of homework each week and yet it has an average ranking of eight. The other countries listed set roughly the same amount of homework each week and they have similar rankings. For each

country below the OECD data is discussed and a comparison is made with other countries.

As well as information collected through personal contact and the OECD data information will also be given from recent literature relevant to that country.

Australia

The OECD (2014) data shows that Australian pupils completed on average six hours of homework each week and this had not changed significantly from 2003. There was very little difference in the PISA mathematics score when homework was increased. The OECD (2014) showed that an increase of one hour per week of homework increased the students' mathematics score by one point. A lecturer in Teacher Education during a personal discussion, in April 2015, stated that homework in Australia was primarily set to reinforce the learning taking place in the classroom and to cover additional content. Homework clubs were set up after school usually one afternoon per week to give any students additional help. Schools did have a homework policy and a home-school agreement which was signed every year. Homework was not usually differentiated and in order to complete it students needed access to a computer and the internet. Homework was posted on the school portal at the start of term for students to access. There was some evidence that homework did improve grades but it did not increase the motivation of the students. There were sanctions in place for not completing homework and these took the form of a demerit on the students' point scale. However different states and territories in Australia will have their own homework policy or guidelines. In 2013 the Parliament of Victoria commissioned an inquiry in to homework in schools in the state. This was published in 2014 and stated

"The most authoritative, learned academics, teaching professionals, teaching educators and importantly individual

school communities, parent and students have differing opinions on the value of homework."

(Victoria Parliament, 2014 pix)

The enquiry listed a number of key findings including timely feedback was crucial, flipped learning (reversing learning at school to alternative environments including online work) could be considered, quality rather than quantity of homework was important, homework could be supported by parents to help their understanding of the curriculum, homework should be differentiated, homework clubs could be effective and homework policies should be reviewed. Reference was made to good homework practice in the UK where lesson plans and homework are aligned. In 2012 Australia was ranked nineteenth for mathematics, thirteenth for reading and sixteenth for science on the PISA performance tables.

Denmark

In Copenhagen in February 2012, the Mayor, Anne Vang, proposed to ban homework at selected Copenhagen schools for students in the fourth, fifth and seventh grades (eleven to fourteen years of age). Instead of taking work home the school day would be extended so they could have teacher support in completing any tasks (The Copenhagen Post, 2012). The OECD (2014) data shows that on average pupils were completing one hour less of homework each week compared with 2003. The data also showed that scores in the PISA mathematics test increased slightly with more homework. The OECD (2014) showed that an increase of one hour per week of homework increased the students' mathematics score by four points. In 2012 Denmark was ranked twenty-second for mathematics, twenty-fifth for reading and twenty-seventh for science on the PISA performance tables.

During personal visits to Danish schools in September 2014 it was noted that many of the tasks set in lesson time were in applied learning and were left to the students to decide how they wanted to complete the task and therefore, if any homework was set, it is also individualised.

Finland

According to the OECD (2014) Finnish pupils are reaching a higher level of academic achievement than other pupils in similar countries and yet they have one of the lightest homework loads spending less than three hours each week completing homework compared with the average of six hours each week. There was very little difference between the average hours per week of homework completed between the socio-economically disadvantaged and advantaged students. The OECD (2014) showed that an increase of one hour per week of homework increased the students' mathematics score by two points. In 2012 Finland was ranked twelfth for mathematics, sixth for reading and fifth for science on the PISA performance tables. Sahlberg (2015) explained that some educators in Finland do not believe that homework supports better learning. He also explained that students in Finnish schools did not feel as anxious and under pressure at school through their work load as those students in countries where homework was given.

“A relaxed culture of learning and a lack of stress and anxiety certainly play a role in the achievement of good overall results in Finnish schools.”

(Sahlberg, 2015 p92)

According to Horsley and Walker (2013), the Ministry of Education in Finland does not impose a homework policy but instead homework is embedded in the national curriculum as practices that may contribute to learning. In personal discussion with a secondary school teacher in Finland, April 2015, it

was stated that education took place in school and additional work in the form of homework to be undertaken outside school hours was not given and work was only given when it was not completed in school.

France

The Times Education Supplement in February 2013 reported in an article "Is it time to scrap homework?" and stated that Francois Hollande, the the President of France, declared in October 2012 that homework would end primary schools and that independent learning would take place on the school premises at the end of the school day. He felt that work should be completed at school not at home. He felt that giving homework was widening the gap between abilities in French schools. The more able and motivated students were given more homework than the less able or motivated students. He also felt that the more advantaged students were more likely to have a home environment conducive to home study with the resources to support this. The amount of homework pupils in France complete is in line with the OECD (2014) average for all countries and this has dropped by nearly two hours each week since 2003. The OECD (2014) data showed that an increase of one hour per week of homework increased the students' mathematics score by thirteen points. In 2012 France was ranked twenty-fifth on the Pisa performance table for mathematics, twenty-first for reading and twenty-fifth for science. There are no homework clubs in France so any work is completed at home. During personal discussion with a lecturer in teacher education, in March 2015, it was stated that the type of work set was to reinforce what was undertaken during the lesson and was sometimes differentiated. The only resources needed to complete homework at home were the student's school books. According to the lecturer there was no evidence that homework improved grades but there was an increase in motivation and learning skills. There was a home-school agreement in place.

Singapore

According to the OECD (2014) Singapore is ranked third behind Shanghai (13.8 hours) and Russia (9.7 hours) in the number of hour's homework the students have each week. The OECD (2014) showed that an increase of one hour per week of homework increased the students' mathematics score by seventeen points. Fifteen year old students in Singapore receive on average 9.4 hours of homework each week. Singapore was ranked second behind Shanghai-China in the PISA mathematics performance table and is also ranked third for both reading and science behind Shanghai and Hong Kong-China.

In October 2014 a Member of Parliament in Singapore asked the Minister for Education "what measures have been implemented to reduce or manage the homework load of students in primary and secondary schools?" Ministry of Education Singapore (2014). The response from the Minister for Education was students, parents and teachers saw the importance of homework and the need for it in assessing the understanding of work completed in class. However, teachers should take into consideration the learning needs and abilities of their students and schools should take account of the home school balance for the students and that they should monitor when homework is set by each subject so that there is not an overload on any particular day and that the amount of homework set is appropriate.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Education stated in an interview with the Singapore Newspaper, *the Straits Times*, in December 2014 that "homework, when used appropriately, can aid students' learning, contribute to their progress and cultivate a healthy disposition towards learning".

This was reinforced through personal discussion, in May 2015, with a teacher from a secondary school in Singapore when she said that homework was set to consolidate knowledge and skills and was used meaningfully to inform instructions and provide feedback to students. Year Ten students were expected to undertake between sixty and ninety minutes each day. There were no homework clubs to support students with their homework. The teacher followed up any non-completion of homework with the student, engaged parents and in some cases, students would stay behind after school under supervision to complete their homework. Through homework assignments, students were given the opportunity to learn outside the classroom and nurture greater self-discipline, time management as well as cultivate lifelong habits of independent, self-directed learning and positive work ethics. Homework was differentiated and it was the quality and not quantity; to practice skills taught and process information learnt resulting in better understanding and retention of learning. The type of homework was also dependent on student's age, ability and development. Students were expected to access workbooks, worksheets, exercise books and sometimes computers or notebooks for research. All schools in Singapore carried out E-learning days where students did not attend school but would log-on to the school learning portal to do their assignments via computers at home. Teachers provided consultation and assistance via E-Learning. Local research carried out in 2010 showed positive correlations between homework and academic achievements but not too much homework which is detrimental to the point of diminishing returns. There was a homework policy but no home-school agreements as schools preferred to communicate with parents through letters and inform them of subject tests and homework.

United States of America

According to the OECD 2014 pupils in the USA complete around the same amount of homework each week as Australian pupils, around six hours each

week. The PISA score for changes in students mathematics score when more homework was in place was actually a negative figure OECD (2014) showing that an increase of one hour per week of homework decreased the students' mathematics score by two points. In other words the more homework, the less well the pupils achieved. In 2012 the USA was ranked thirty-sixth for mathematics, twenty-fourth for reading and twenty-eighth for science on the PISA performance tables. Information received from a lecturer in teacher training in the USA in March 2015 stated that homework was set to reinforce and repeat work carried out in class, preparing for the next lesson was regarded as too difficult to undertake. Short activities were set which could be completed quickly and without resources. Grades did improve with homework but not the motivation of students, however development was seen in discipline and learning skills.

In 2013 Pope *et al* reviewed twenty studies on homework related to the amount of homework and the effect of homework on the students. They found that on average a student was spending three hours each night on homework and that very few of them found the work "useful or meaningful" and in order to complete homework successfully the student needed to see that the homework was relevant and that teachers monitored the work. They also found that students from middle or upper class backgrounds were set more homework than those from low income backgrounds. The study did not find any correlation between undertaking more homework and achieving higher grades. Pope *et al* (2013) made recommendations following this study. Teachers should set homework that is relevant, has clear directions so that the student can understand the work and that the student has some element of choice in how it is completed. Work should be differentiated, the tasks are those which cannot be completed in class and where possible the work should be applied.

Some schools have taken on board the "Ten minute rule" as described by Caspari (2015) that the amount of homework increase by ten minutes for each year of school so that older students could receive as much as two hours per night. However the article went on to say that "Although the Ten minute rule has been apparently endorsed by the NEA (National Education Association) since 2006 we did not find evidence that this standard was being uniformly applied" (Caspari, 2016). The article also stated that some schools have abandoned homework due the stress it caused and that others were reviewing the type of activities set and taking in to account the home environment where homework is completed.

2.9 Summary

As noted throughout this review the same debates around homework: purpose, value, and whether it should be set have been repeated across the years. The four contextual factors highlighted by Hallam (2004), political, economic, social and educational, have clear relevance throughout the study. The research has shown that homework can make a contribution to achievement but it also showed that it can be disruptive to what the students are doing outside school, including family life. Although consecutive governments may have suggested guidelines for homework, the completion of homework has never been made statutory school policy. The main stakeholders, teachers, parents and students, stated that although they saw homework as beneficial to achievement they also had views about the drawbacks in setting, completing and monitoring homework.

Homework has a purpose, as described throughout the literature review, and in particular by Gladman in 1885 and by Hallam in 2004, when it was stated that teachers needed clear guidance on what to set and what was the purpose of it. They needed to take in to consideration the work load of students and the school-life balance. Hallam (2004) also stated that students

needed to know what was the relevance of the homework and how it would improve their learning. Hallam (2004) concluded by saying that discussions around homework had taken place for around one hundred years and that rather than debate the amount of homework set, the debate should consider the purpose and quality of it. It has been demonstrated here that there has been very little change in that time. Taking Hallam's (2004) perceived purposes and advantages of homework (Appendix 11) of promoting academic learning, developing generic skills, of benefit to schools, promoting home-school liaison and promoting family communication it can be seen how the literature has discussed these ideas. Homework can only promote academic development if the correct type of work is given to support and reinforce work carried out in class.

Homework has been used within, and as a supplement to the curriculum. In the 19th century it was used to supplement the curriculum in order to increase the academic development and exam results. In the mid 20th century it was again used to supplement the curriculum in order for the UK to compete academically with other countries. Towards the end of the 20th century research showed that homework should be an integral part of the curriculum and not a standalone piece of work, although schools were using it to increase study time and improve study skills.

Homework has been an issue for some students and their families due to a lack of resources and environment to complete homework at home and has caused tensions between parents and their children. Until the 19th century, education was socially and gender biased. However once more children from differing social background were receiving education a different type of issue arose and that was the issue of home conditions and environments for children to undertake homework. This issue was raised in the late 19th century when home lessons were difficult for some students due to their lack

space and the fact that some children were also working when not at school to supplement the family income. By the mid 20th century there was a widening socio-economic gap between grammar schools and secondary modern schools with students in grammar schools being set more homework than those attending secondary modern schools. Parents can influence the home environment by giving their children space, resources, attitude and support but there is a difference between socio-economic and cultural groups. However schools could take home environments into consideration when planning the type of homework tasks and the support they give in space, time and resources to support it.

Homework has often been discussed in Parliament and political parties have taken a view on it, however no political party will take the stance that it must be statutory and all stakeholders must take responsibility for it. When the guidelines were eventually set down in the 1990s, it was still up to the individual schools to implement this. In 2012 the government abandoned the guidelines stating that again it was up to individual schools to decide on what, when and how homework is set

Homework has been in and out of favour with families from when children were needed to earn money and therefore could not spend time completing homework in the evenings. Research showed that those students in different economic environments received different experiences in the homework set and the support given at home. It has been shown by some, that homework can make an academic difference and if countries want to compete on a global front then their academic capability must be raised.

"There is no magic set of guidelines for best homework practices. We do know that assigning homework just for the sake of doing so no longer works. A policy appropriately

fitting one group may be totally out of line for another. Instead, homework should be assigned strategically with learning objectives in mind and take into consideration students' goals, levels of readiness, and situations beyond the classroom. The key is to have flexible policies that are frequently revisited to maintain each student's engagement in the learning process."

(Parks Haas, 2008)

A number of issues identified through this review of literature were investigated in the current study: stakeholder's perceptions of the purpose and value of homework, whether homework supports learning and achievement, how long it takes to complete and whether or not it is completed, resources for completion of homework in the home, awareness and understanding of the school homework policy and the extent to which the four factors identified by Hallam were reflected in the context in which the schools developed and publish their homework policy: political, economic, social and educational. The researcher's own personal experience confirmed to her the salience of these particular questions. The investigation was conducted through the analysis of documents, interviews and questionnaires and analysed in relation to the four key questions stated in the introduction.

Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research paradigm, the methodology and, within that, the research methods chosen and why they were selected to address the focus of the current research study. It describes how, based on the findings of the pilot study, the research methods were adapted and modified to be implemented in the main study.

The focus of this study was to investigate stakeholder's perceptions of issues related to homework: its purpose and value, whether it supports learning and achievement, how long it takes to complete and whether or not it is completed, resources for completion in the home, awareness and understanding of school policy and the extent to which political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam 2004) were reflected in the context in which the schools developed and publish their homework policy. In order to address this, it was necessary to collect data relating to stakeholders' own views and their understanding of the issues as well as to published material relating to school and national policy contexts. This approach required both qualitative methods to elicit views and opinions of the four groups of stakeholders: students, families, teachers and governors, and quantitative to enable the views and opinions to be compared across the groups as objectively as possible. This study therefore adopted a mixed method design.

Research Design Flow Chart

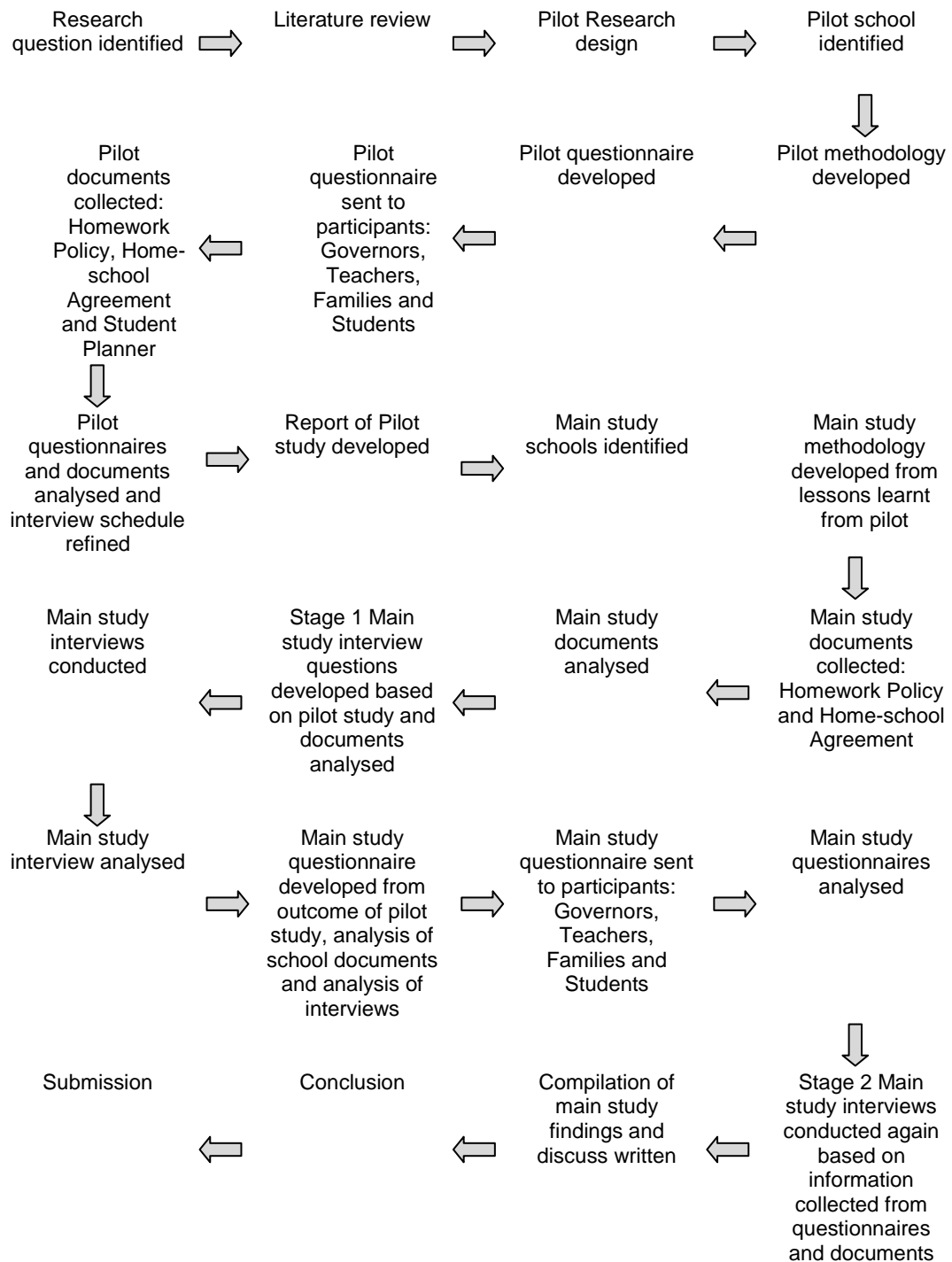


Figure 3.1: Research design flow diagram

Structure of the chapter

In the text below there is an explanation as to which participants were selected and how they were selected for the study, as well as the ethical approach taken when working with them. There is discussion of ontological and epistemological considerations in relation to data collection related to the focus of the current research. Research methodology, methods and instruments are described and the mixed method approach to research is justified. In explaining each research method the advantages and disadvantages are also discussed and the way in which they were used in this particular research study. Also included is an outline of the analytical framework against which the information gathered from the documents, questionnaires and interviews was analysed.

3.2 Sampling

Most research will involve sampling. The decision about what and how to sample must be conducted early on in the research so that factors concerning time, expense and accessibility can be taken into consideration. Cohen *et al* (2011:143) explained five factors to be considered in sampling: sample size, representativeness of the sample, access to the sample, sampling strategy to be used and the kind of research to be undertaken.

The sample size is determined by the type of study undertaken. In terms of representativeness, whether the sample should be a representation of the population to be researched depends upon the focus of the particular study.

3.2.1 Pilot Study Sample

In preparation for the main study a pilot study was carried out with one school as a feasibility study to trial the questionnaire and investigated the types of documents to be scrutinised in the main study. The pilot study was

conducted in a school where the researcher had had personal contact for a number of years and had worked with that school on a previous research project. The sample at the school was chosen by the Head Teacher in discussion with the Head of Year. The student sample was one tutor group in Year Ten. The students gave their families a questionnaire, twenty members of teaching staff were randomly chosen by the head of year and all fourteen governors were sent a questionnaire. The pilot study is discussed in more detail in section 3.10 of this chapter.

3.2.2 Main Study Sample

In the main study an amended version of the questionnaire was completed by the four groups of stakeholders in six schools. In addition, interview schedules were drawn up and interviews carried out with a senior member of staff with responsibility for homework in each school. Sets of school documents relating to homework policy and practice were also scrutinised: policies, home-school agreements, homework diaries and the school web sites.

Location

The town for the main study was chosen due to its proximity to the researcher and through personal contact with all schools in the area. The town has a large number of secondary schools in the area with a diverse school population.

Institutions

Six secondary schools were included in the research. These were from different areas of the town covering most catchment areas and included a faith school, a new school, an academy, a school in Ofsted notice to improve, a school graded as Ofsted Outstanding and a school with Teaching School Status. Information about the six schools is in more detail in chapter four.

Participants

There were four groups of participants comprising the main stakeholders involved in homework at the schools, students, families, teachers and governors.

Year ten students were identified for the study as they had experienced of range of subjects and they were not directly involved in any external examinations at the time. The head teacher and the head of year, selected a tutor group to take part in the study. A tutor group was chosen rather than a particular subject group as this would be mixed ability and would involve students of both sexes, studying different subjects, with different backgrounds and social groups including those with English as an additional language.

The students taking part in the study were asked to invite their families to also participate.

All teaching staff at the schools were given a copy of the teacher questionnaires therefore a range of teachers were invited to participate who taught a variety of subjects and ability groups.

All governors were invited to take part including parent, local authority, co-opted and sponsor governors.

Interviews took place with members of the senior leadership team who had responsibility for the curriculum, and alongside that, homework.

3.3 Research Paradigm

Educational research paradigms take into account ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches or assumptions.

Ontology is described by Blaikie as referring to

"the claims and assumptions [that] are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units makes it up and how these units interact with each other."

(Blaikie, 1995 p6)

Epistemology may be interpreted as the theory of knowledge surrounding a particular social phenomenon and how that knowledge can be collected, interpreted and used to study the phenomenon.

"[...] it presents a view and a justification for what can be regarded as knowledge - what can be known and what criteria such knowledge must satisfy in order to be called knowledge rather than beliefs."

(Blaikie, 1995 p7)

Methodology is the whole approach to collect data and organise the findings to address the focus of the research reflecting the ontological and epistemological assumptions that are made.

"A methodology can be defined as a broad approach to ... inquiry, with general preferences for certain types of designs, sampling logic, analytical strategies , and the like."

(Williams and Vogt, 2011 p187)

Methodology is necessarily linked to the design, the methods and instruments used, the ways these methods are implemented and how the data is analysed.

Punch (2014) summarises ontological, epistemological and methodological issues as

"What the reality is (ontology)

What the relationship is between the researcher and that reality (epistemology)

What methods can be used for studying the reality (methodology)."

(Punch, 2014 p15)

3.3.1 Personal positioning

In the introduction there is a explanation of the personal rationale for this particular study from the position of the researcher as a previous Class Teacher, Head of Department, Senior Teacher and School Governor. As a Class Teacher the researcher was required to follow school policy in setting homework. As a Head of Department the researcher monitored the setting and marking of homework across the department. As a Senior Teacher the researcher was expected to monitor that the homework policy adhered to at a whole school level. As a School Governor the researcher was responsible for reviewing the homework policy and the implementation of that policy within the school. From all these experiences, the researcher had knowledge and understanding that influenced the questions asked, informed how to collect and analyse the data and the contribution to knowledge.

3.4 Stages of Research Design

Conventionally, as Best (2012) notes, the stages of research design might be described as firstly identifying the problem of the study, then undertaking a

literature search to see if any investigations have already taken place on the topic. Following this comes identification of the research population and the selection or sample established. Just as importantly is the identification of the kind of data that will appropriately address the research focus. Ethical considerations can then be taken into account. Questions over data analysis need to be answered, the data is then analysed and conclusions drawn. Three factors should be considered at an early stage, is the research design suitable, is it feasible and is it ethical?, Denscombe (2010). The study should be suitable to produce appropriate data and the purpose of the study should be clearly identified with clear links between the purpose and the strategy. The study should be completed in the time given, meet the deadlines set with the resources available, and are the participants, documents and information should be readily available. Ethical considerations are discussed in section 3.9 of this chapter

"The researcher should choose a strategy that is likely to be successful in achieving the aims of the research, and be able to justify the choice of this strategy clearly and explicitly."

(Denscombe, 2010 p5)

3.4.1 Mixed method research

As noted above the purpose of this research was to investigate "What is the purpose of homework and should schools set it?". In order to investigate this it was crucial to elicit the views of the stakeholders and to compare views across groups. It was important therefore that the ontological assumptions should be both constructivist as befits a study that focuses on the constructions of participants and also realist in order that relevant data associated with the four participant groups could be analysed statistically to investigate differences, as befits a study that adopts an approach to analysing

data that predisposes to a statistical approach. The consequence of these considerations is that the choice of approach to this study is mixed method.

Mixed method research has gained more prominence since the 1970s. Punch (2013) explained that the rationale behind the use of mixed methods research is that more can be learnt about the topic of research if the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods are used. As Matthews and Ross (2010:144) stated

"A mixed method approach to choosing data collection methods should come from the research questions and show that the research questions can be best answered using both types of data."

(Matthews and Ross, 2010 p144)

When adopting a mixed method approach to research "the crucial consideration is how well the research tools work rather than how well they fit within a specific research philosophy" (Denscombe, 2010:150). Denscombe described characteristics of the mixed method approach as qualitative and quantitative, and pragmatic. Qualitative and quantitative data are brought together in the design with pragmatism supporting the practical approach to the research problem.

A further advantage of using mixed methods research that is relevant to the current research is that it allows the researcher to address questions not answered by qualitative and quantitative methods alone. As Denscombe also noted however, the disadvantages of mixed method research are cost in time, the need for development of more than one method and misinterpretation of the philosophy of mixed method research.

This mixed methods research study used interviews to investigate the views and opinions of those with responsibility for overseeing homework at the schools, documentary analysis to analyse the homework related documents of the schools and questionnaires to elicit the views of the four main stakeholders: students, families, teachers and governor. Interviews and documentary analysis provided the qualitative data and questionnaires the quantitative. The questionnaires however also gave participants the opportunity to add personal views and therefore some qualitative research was derived from free text boxes.

In this study qualitative methods investigated individual perceptions, opinions and understanding. School websites share with all stakeholders key documents including policies, handbooks and home-school agreements. These were analysed before the interviews with senior teachers so that key questions could be asked. Through the interviews with senior teachers and the analysis of documents and agreements, an understanding of the issues concerning homework emerged. Although the interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions, it was through the initial responses that more in-depth questioning could take place and therefore a deeper understanding and insight could be achieved. The questionnaires were then developed based on the information from the literature review, documentary analysis and interviews with senior teachers. In doing this, the qualitative research methods could support the development of the quantitative research method and enabled data collection for statistical analysis of differences of perceptions between groups. Some further interviews took place with senior staff based on the outcomes of the questionnaires thus the quantitative research methods supported the qualitative research methods.

3.5 Qualitative research

The qualitative method of research refers to the collection and analysing of evidence through social process. Qualitative research relies on using information gained from observations, documents and interviews. It often takes the form, for example, of words, objects, pictures, actions and behaviour and can focus on an understanding of experiences (Newby, 2010). It may be seen as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (McLeod, 1994:77). The Office for National Statistics (2013b) also described qualitative research methods as providing an understanding of the subject in the context it is set.

“Qualitative methods may be semi-structured or free flowing depending on the research questions and objectives. Qualitative methods are resource intensive from the point of view of the research time required - not only in relation to fieldwork, but also in the way in which qualitative data must be analysed and reported on.”

(The Office for National Statistics 2013b)

The qualitative methods used in this study were the collection and analysis of documents and interviews conducted with senior teachers with responsibility for homework in the schools.

3.5.1 Documentary Analysis

Documents are often underused as a research resource and yet there is a wide range of primary document sources, including policies, diaries, books, papers, letters, reports, debates, committees, photographs and speeches. Whatever document source is used, it is important to verify the authenticity and reliability and to demonstrate that it is genuine and accurate.

Denscombe (2010) described the advantages of using documentary research as being cost effective especially in large scale data collection. The documents give the researcher access to a large amount of information and the documents are permanent. Matthews and Ross (2010) also stated the advantages of using documentary data and these included that documents are readily available and contain a large amount of information. This information can be used to triangulate with other sources of data and set the context for the researcher. However the disadvantages as described by Denscombe could be the credibility of the source and that the document must be carefully scrutinised. The researcher should be wary of using secondary data and the documents could be open to misinterpretation and therefore unreliable. Matthews and Ross listed the disadvantages as including documents that are not readily available as they may be lost or altered, and therefore information in them may have changed over time and unless the full context is known they may be misleading.

Some schools made documents available on their website, and if they were not on the website the schools made them available as hard copy. In some cases the schools had supporting documents and guidance for parents on how to support their child with their homework.

As seen in the literature review, documents dating back to the nineteenth century in the form of books, newspapers and Parliamentary proceedings have been found to support this study.

Matthews and Ross' (2010) advice was taken into consideration when scrutinising documents. They stated that researchers should validate authenticity of documents, understand the social, political and economic

context it was written in and what has changed since the document was written, and question its value to the research. The researcher should also identify the documents related to each other. As Cohen *et al* (2011) explained, once a document has been verified and known to be reliable it can then be analysed. This could involve taking into account the broader meaning of the document and setting it in the context of the writer and reader.

3.5.2 Documentary analysis process

For each document a number of questions needed to be considered, as described by Blaxter *et al*. They stated that for each document the following needed to be addressed -

- Who is the author?
- What is their position?
- What are biases?
- Where and when was the document produced?
- How was it produced? Who for?
- In what context was the document produced?
- What are the underlying assumptions?
- What does the document say, and not say?

(Blaxter et al, 2010 p230)

Any documents produced were analysed for comparisons and contrasts between the schools. Some documents were produced for both families and students, whereas the main audience of others were internal staff. All the schools involved in the study had a school website with key information including the home-school agreement. All the schools made reference to homework on their website but not necessarily as a homework policy, but in some cases it is called the Independent Learning Policy or the Learning and Teaching Policy. As there was parental choice allowing parents to choose

which school they would like to send their children to, all schools were in a competitive market and therefore made their websites as informative as possible to prospective parents and students and in so doing promoted the schools.

For the purpose of this study the school homework policy and home school agreements were scrutinised thematically and themes linked to the key questions asked, the purpose of homework, the homework environment and access to resources and the question of whether homework has an impact on school work and progress. These were then compared with the other schools in the investigation. Once the information had been gathered from the documentary evidence, interview questions could be established and interviews carried out with the senior teacher at each school who had responsibility for the curriculum and homework.

3.5.3 Interviews

Interviewing is seen as one of the more common research methods used to collect information. As Drever (1995) described, interviews as a flexible approach with different types of interviewing possible. Matthews and Ross (2010:219) described an interview as "a particular type of conversation between two or more people. Usually the interview is controlled by one person who asks questions of the other". An interview is direct interactions between the interviewer and interviewee. However, there are contradictor views, for example as Cohen *et al* (2011) noted, an interview is unlike an everyday conversation as it has a specific purpose, it is often question led, constructed and planned.

As data collection instruments interviews have both advantages and disadvantages (Denscombe, 2010). The advantages of interviews are seen as gaining a depth of information and the interviewer can probe further into

answers given and lines of enquiry can be flexible and adjustments made to questions as the interview progresses, there is a high response rate as interviews are pre-planned and information is collected immediately and limited equipment is required. Disadvantages include the amount of time taken to plan, conduct and analyse the interviews as the responses will be of a non-standard format and the interviewee may feel inhibited in responding to some questions if the interview is being recorded. Although notes would be taken at the interview, it is suggested by Denscombe that most interviewers audio record the interview and after transcribing the interview it is checked by the interviewee. Three main problems with audio recordings are seen as "the recorded talk is not always easy to hear", "People do not always speak in nice finite sentences" and "Intonation, emphasis and accents used in speech are hard in a transcript" Denscombe (2010:276-277)

The interview must be prepared and the type of questions asked may depend on certain factors including how in depth the questions will be, whether questions will be dealing with facts or opinions and any previous knowledge of the situation, (Cohen et al, 2011).

Three main types of interviews are structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews use a pre-planned list of questions and do not deviate from this list. The responses to the questions may also be pre-determined and options given to the interviewee. An advantage of this type of interview is that it is easier to analyse due to the standard responses. Semi-structured interviews offer a little more flexibility in the questions in that a pre-planned list will be used however deviation from the list depending on the responses given would be acceptable. The questions may allow for open ended responses so that the interviewer can expand on any points. Matthews and Ross (2010:231) suggested questions such as "Can you tell me more about that?", "What

happened next?" or "In what way?" can be used to probe a little deeper in to the responses given. Unstructured interviews allows the interviewee to use their own words to respond to questions and can take the form of a conversation.

Any of these types of interview can be conducted with either one-to-one or group interviews. The one-to-one interview is easier to arrange as it just one interviewee and only involves the responses of one person. It is also possible to control the questions asked and to ask more probing questions based on the responses in order to get a more in-depth understanding of what the interviewee means. Rather than face-to-face a telephone interview may be conducted to save time for both participants. Telephone interviewing would be suitable for structured or semi-structured interviews as they do not require visual contact. When interviewing a group it is more difficult to control the questions and responses as some may dominate the conversation while others do not want to contribute however a benefit is obtaining opinions of more than one person in the same time as it takes to interview just one.

For the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview approach was adopted and whenever possible face to face, individual interviews rather than telephone interviews took place. However, the telephone interviews were pre-planned with the interviewee. Interviews were conducted at each school with the member of staff responsible for the curriculum. Owing to requests from the first senior teacher interviewees that the interviews was not recorded it was decided not to record any interviews. This meant that all notes taken during the interviews were handwritten and summarised by the interviewer whilst asking questions. Where quotations are used to illustrate findings in the next chapter, these quotations are taken from the handwritten notes that have been approved by the interviewee. Questions asked at interview (Appendix 27) were based on information found on the school website and

information discussed in the literature review and these in turn informed the final questions asked in the questionnaires. Following the interviews and the analysis of the questions, further interviews were undertaken with some members of staff for clarification on some points. Once these interviews had been analysed, questionnaires were designed to support the results of the findings.

3.5.4 Rationale for Questions

Based on previous research, research of literature and obtaining documents from the school websites, questions were asked of the senior teachers with the responsibility for overseeing homework.

In order to contextualise the rationale for some of the questions it is important to note that in 1998, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education in the Labour government, set down guidelines for each age group. For year ten students the guidelines are between ninety and 150 minutes each day. DfEE (1998a) not only gave guidelines for the amount of homework, but also how it should be organised with enough time given to complete it and support given to those students who would not have any help at home. The tasks set should be appropriate for the student and support the work undertaken in class. Examples were given in the report as investigations, interviews, designs, revision, readings, drawings, research essays, reports experiments and projects. The report also suggested that homework should be included in the planning of schemes of work and lesson plans. Feedback should be given promptly after the homework has been completed. The homework policy should be reviewed and parents involved in this review. All governing bodies would include parent representatives and they would have the opportunity to be part of the review committee. The report also identified support for effective homework and these included a teacher's knowledge of home circumstances of their students and to involve parents. Homework

clubs should support students who either cannot or do not want to complete homework at home.

The organisation of homework and homework policy

In order to establish how homework is organised at the school the following questions were asked. How is homework organised and if there was a homework timetable. What type of homework worked best, if it was differentiated and if the work set was based on work covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson. A question was also asked regarding what resources students were expected to be able to access in order to complete their homework.

Homework club

The senior teacher was asked if there was a homework club at the school and if there was who supported the running of this club and the students who attended it. It was not always academic members of staff working in homework clubs and this was asked to establish who supported the pupils at the club.

Why is homework set?

Homework was set at different schools for different reasons and these were outlined in their documents related to homework. The question was asked to establish these reasons and to confirm if these reasons were also conveyed to teachers, governors, students and their families as it would also be asked in the questionnaires.

Sanctions

This question would also be asked in the questionnaires. If sanctions were given for not completing homework it was necessary to confirm from the senior teacher what they were so that responses corresponded.

The future of homework

Some schools were in the process of investigating the role of homework on the curriculum and alternative ways so the question was asked "Has your school thought of not setting homework?".

The impact of homework

Schools often gave the reasons for setting homework as improving grades, increasing motivation and developing learning skills. These questions were asked to verify these reasons for setting homework and therefore justify homework being set.

3.5.5 Interview analysis

Interview analysis starts with analysing the notes from the interview, that have been approved by the interviewee, and from these, themes emerged and charts produced. Data elicited during interviews may be seen as constructions generated during interactions between the interviewer and interviewee. Guidance from Hycner (1985) indicates that interpreting and analysing interviews includes reading the whole interview to get the bigger picture, deleting any unnecessary information, clustering themes, writing a summary of the interview and checking this with the interviewee for accuracy. For this study the interview questions were semi structured but during the interview process the interviewer probed for further information where relevant, making the analysis more time consuming as there is no established response for the closed questions. However, themes were established from the closed questions and were the basis of the analysis. Matthews and Ross (2010) suggest when working with thematic analysis that a number of processes are worked through in order to complete the analysis. They suggest the following...

- describe the data
- get to the meaning of the data for the person who produced it
- explore the data for meanings
- look for relationships between different parts of the data
- explain the similarities and differences and the apparent relationships.

(Matthews and Ross, 2010 p373)

Findings from the interviews and the way they addressed the research focus and the four key questions are discussed in Chapter Five. Although responses may be very similar between schools each interviewee had a personal interpretation of the issues discussed. The outcomes are then considered against other schools in the study to compare and contrast what issues are similar between the schools and what may be different, including associations between the established themes: Information and Communications Technology, Equity, Sanctions, Differentiation, Documentation and the Future of Homework.

3.6 Quantitative research

Quantitative research is collecting data that can be converted into a numerical analysis. The data can be collected by various research methods including survey, experiments and questionnaires. Quantitative research includes asking participants for their opinions on a given issue in a structured way so that the information collected can be analysed and statistics produced. Advantages and disadvantages of quantitative analysis are described by Denscombe (2010). The purpose of quantitative data collection in this study is that information could be elicited from the different groups of participants so

that comparisons and contrasts made in order to address the research questions.

Disadvantages include too much focus being given to the analysis over the issues surrounding the research question. As with all information collected it is what the researcher does with the information that is important, what they choose to include and what they choose to leave out of the findings.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

The quantitative research methods used for this study were questionnaires. Based on the information from literature, interviews with senior members of staff, school documents and policies, a series of questions were designed to ask all participants. Many questions were similar and responses were cross referenced. The responses required for the questions included, ranking, lists, and free text. Different types of list questions were used in the questionnaires including asking the respondent to rank information to show the level of importance, to indicate a number of different responses that applied to them or they were given a choice of possible answers and asked to select one answer. Some questions required the respondent to give their own answer and these were a sub question of a previously asked question and related to it so that further information could be collected.

"Any survey is only as good as the questions asked."

(Best 2012, p265)

Often questionnaires are a research method of collecting data from a large number of participants without the researcher being present and can be easily collated, therefore this was the method used. Denscombe (2010) stated that the constructing of questionnaires should be crisp and concise

with the researchers having a clear vision of what issues need to be addressed through the research and goes on to describe the wording of the questions as one of the most difficult features in the design but also one of the most important to get right. Respondents would not want to be irritated or annoyed by the questions and the success of the questionnaire depended on the willingness of the respondent. Denscombe (2010) stated that there are a number of advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaires. Questionnaires are more economical and easier to arrange than other methods when working with a large number of participants. Pre-coded answers give researchers the advantage of a quicker analysis of the questions. Munn and Drever (2007) also included advantages as giving the respondent's anonymity and that questions can be standardised so that all respondents were asked the same questions. However the disadvantages include the inability to check the truthfulness of the respondent and that some questions may have a bias towards the researcher's thinking. It is important to take care over the length of the questionnaire as all information will be needed to be collected at the time, as there may not be the opportunity to follow up any responses or revisit that group of respondents.

Youngman (1978) explained that there are a variety of question structures and each of those types of questions has their own problems. Question structures can include the verbal or open question, lists, categories, ranking, quantity, a grid may be given in the form of a table, a scale may be offered or a factual question. Questions can take the form of structured and semi structured closed questions or open questions. According to Denscombe (2010) open questions allow the respondents to express themselves in their own words, however, as they do have to use text often these questions are not completed. Closed questions provided information which is of uniform length and easier to work with and analyse. Lists can be used where there may be a number of possible answers the respondent can choose and a "tick

all that apply" statement may be added. Categories are often used at the start of questionnaires to establish facts about the respondent so that comparison analysis can be made for example age may be given 18 - 25, 25 - 30. Ordering or ranking questions can be seen as the next step on from multiple choice questions and will ask the respondent to prioritise their answers. Some questions may ask for a response as a number so that a quantity can be submitted. A grid may be used when a number of questions are related or have a common scale. Scales can ask for the respondents' opinion on a certain issue and the scale may be strongly agree to strongly disagree or a number scale sometimes with an odd number allowing the respondent to have a neutral stance however many respondents find this middle ground an easy option rather than giving a commitment to answer. Factual questions are often structured as yes or no questions.

When designing questionnaires there is the choice of whether to use papers or internet questionnaires. Designing a computer based questionnaire would rely on the researcher's ability to manage the process of designing, giving access to the respondents and relying on the respondent's ability to access the questionnaire and complete it. Advantages of computer data collection include the cost and in some cases this can be free, if participants are located at a distance from the researcher they could access the questionnaire, and the information can be accessed anywhere.

A number of issues arise from this discussion of questionnaires in relation to the study including:

- Consistency and standardisation is important so the similar, questionnaires were used for the all respondent groups, students, families, teachers and governors.
- From the initial search of literature and from interviews with the senior teacher, questionnaires were written which included questions related

to why stakeholders thought homework was set, how relevant it was to the classwork, the feedback received after completing homework and whether it was felt that it made a difference to their learning.

- Multiple choice questions were included in the questionnaire for this study using the ipsative or forced-choice method.
- The respondent was given a list of possible answers and was either asked to choose only one or to tick as many boxes as applied to them.
- Consideration had to be made to the answers given and the order they were placed in so that no priority was given to one possible answer over another and therefore influence the respondent.
- As all stakeholders were asked similar questions consideration had to be given to the wording of the questions so that they were understood by all involved and that there was no ambiguity, for example the words 'occasionally', 'often' and 'sometimes' may have similar meanings to different respondents and therefore it would be better to give a choice of time scale for example less than once, 1 - 3 times, 4 - 6 times and more than 7 times.
- At the end of some multiple choice questions, the respondent was given the opportunity to give an answer not shown.
- The questionnaires for this study were paper based as it was easier to administer to different types of stakeholders and in order to get a good return.
- The questionnaires were given out to students and administered by their class teacher in five of the six schools.
- The family questionnaires were given to the students to take home and they were asked to return them to their tutor.
- The teacher questionnaires were put in staff pigeon holes and they were asked to return them to a central collecting point in a way to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

- The governor questionnaires were either given out during a governors meeting or posted to them by the school and they were asked to send them to the central collection point at the school.

(Appendix 23, 24, 25 and 26)

3.6.2 Rationale for Questions

In keeping with the guidelines set out by ESRC (2009), the questionnaire introduces the investigation and explains to the participant how the information given by them will be used and stored, that confidentially will be respected and that they will have the opportunity to see the final report. Each participant was required to give their informed consent based on the information given and by answering any questions they may have. This information is given to each participant on the questions, which can be found in Appendix 23, 24, 25 and 26.

As with the questions asked at interview the questions asked were based on previous research undertaken and the government homework guidelines.

Gender

All questionnaires asked for the gender of the participant. Research carried out by Hughes and Greenhough (2002) found that there was very little difference in gender perception of homework when questions were asked of students, parents and teachers; however the numbers involved in the study were small. Although the previous research showed little difference between the gender of the participants, it was important to know this as gender responses may be different in the particular questions asked in this study.

Why set homework

Teachers were asked why they set homework and if they thought homework would improve grades. They were also asked if completing homework would

help their students to understand classwork. School homework policies and many school agreements would state why homework is set and why it is important. This question would show if teachers understood their school policy and why homework was set by that school.

Home environment

All participants were asked questions regarding the home environment. Governors were asked if school should take into account the home circumstances of the students and if so, what form should this take? Teachers were asked if they took family circumstances into account when setting homework and if the homework required any additional resources, for example, a computer or internet access and if it did, were they aware of which students had access to these resources. Families and students were asked what resources they had available to support homework at home. Both families and students were asked where and when homework was completed and students were also asked if they preferred to work alone or with company. Further questions included if they preferred to work with a television on, music in the background, and if they had an area to complete homework in. Students were asked if a family member helped them who that would be. Families were asked if they helped their children with homework, if they should be expected to help, if they were confident in helping and if they had time to do this. It has been shown in the literature review that the home environment has been an issue for many years and this question will show if schools and teachers are aware of home circumstances and if they make allowances for this.

Homework Club

All participants were asked if there was a homework club at the school. The responses for each school can be compared to see if all are aware that there is homework club and for teachers a question is asked if they have to support

the homework club. If the school has a homework club, is it used by students and what time of day is the homework club running? Does the school take into account the staffing of the homework club in order to support the needs of those students who will be attending?

Type and amount of homework and feedback

Families were asked how much homework they thought their child had each evening and whether this was the right amount of homework. Students were asked how much they received on average each night and if they thought this was the right amount and they were also asked how much was given for each subject. They were also asked how long it actually took them and what sort of homework was set. Guidelines are set down for schools to set homework, but it is up to the school if they follow this. Different subjects and departments in the school may set different type of homework depending on the requirements of the curriculum. However, they may not take into account the learning needs and styles of the students. Along with the home environment and resources need to complete homework, does the school set homework requiring specialist resources or equipment? Each school will have a homework timetable, but does this take into account the type of work set and the length of time needed to complete it. Both students and teachers were asked how long students were given to complete homework before handing it in and following this how soon after completing the homework was feedback given. Feedback is important for students to receive, so that they are able to make progress. This raises the question, will the responses to feedback be the same for both students and teachers.

Stress

Families and students were asked if they thought homework affected family life and family activities, and they and teachers were asked if they thought it caused stress to the students. As can be seen from the literature review

stress caused by working on homework has been an issue for many years, but are schools aware of this and what do they do to support those students. Teachers were asked if their students found it difficult to complete their homework and students were asked which subjects and what type of homework they found most difficult. Teachers were also asked what type of students found homework difficult and caused stress and this could be matched to the student responses based on the gender and ability. If teachers are aware of the type of homework causing stress, are they still setting this type of homework? As already stated, OECD (2015) reported on anxiety levels of students in completing mathematics homework.

Rewards and Sanctions

All participants were asked if there were punishments or sanctions in place and whether they worked. They were given a list of sanctions and asked which were in place at the school. As can be seen from the literature review, there are issues concerning the homework environment and resources needed to complete homework. However, are schools taking this into account when a sanction is given for not completing homework?

Policy and Agreement

Teachers, families and governors were asked if there was a homework policy. Schools are not required to have a homework policy but most do. All teachers should be aware of one if it is in place and governors were asked if they were on the committee which reviews the policy. All participants were asked if there was a home-school agreement. All schools are required to have a home-school agreement, and in most cases both families and students will sign it.

3.6.3 Questionnaire analysis

In order to analyse quantitative Information from the questionnaires, this information was transferred to spreadsheets so that charts and graphs could be produced to show comparisons between respondents. Descriptive analysis examines proportions, percentages and ratios, however Blaxter et al (2010) explained that the analysis should go further and interrelationships between information should be explored. The analysis could use percentages, numbers, ratios, proportions and averages to explain the data. It is often not appropriate to present small numbers as a percentage. However, it was decided to present all information in this study as numbers and percentages, so that comparisons could be made across proportions within groups of respondents and schools.

Matthews and Ross (2010) explained that computer software is a useful tool for the analysis of data collected during an investigation. They stated that the software will not analyse the data and that it is the researcher who must interpret any information and produce the reports. They listed the benefits of using computer software in analysis as supporting the researcher to organise the information in such a way that it is manageable and can be shared with others. The software packages used in this study were Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and software to analyse Chi Squares. Using Excel, information is easy to input, visual representations are created and large amounts of data can be analysed. All the information collected from the questionnaires was recorded onto a spreadsheet. Each school had a separate sheet for governors, teachers, families and students. This was cross referenced with data from all participants in each group, so that all governor respondents were also on one sheet, likewise with the other respondent groups. Therefore, a number of data sheets were created for each school with all participants and each group of participants for all schools, so that all responses, all schools and all groups could be compared. From this

information, tables and figures were created to visually explain the findings alongside the written report.

When appropriate and relevant, proportions of responses were compared statistically across the four stakeholder groups using Chi Squares to see whether there was any significant difference in the responses of the various groups. To give one example it was important to ascertain whether one or more groups felt that homework caused stress more than the other groups. Use of Chi Squares enabled similarities and statistical difference to be highlighted within the group responses.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the degree to which the outcomes of any research study have credibility and therefore this applies to the current research study, in particular to the quantitative aspect, in other words to the questionnaires.

Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

To ensure that the study was trustworthy and faithfully represented the views of the participants, all notes from the interviews were sent back to the interviewees to check for accuracy .

"The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria involved, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue."

(Lincoln and Guba, 1985 p290)

Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research

As Brink (1993) explains reliability is the ability to be consistent in collecting information and when repeating a research method the same or similar results are obtained each time. Brink (1993) also explains that the validity of a study is the reporting of the exact findings of the research and how it was collected.

The definitions of reliability and validity in qualitative research are often presented from different perspectives. Guba (1981), in particular, suggested that the terms credibility and transferability were used for validity, and dependability and confirmability used instead of reliability in this form of research. Credibility is ensuring that the results of the study are believable. Transferability can refer to how the results of the study can be transferred to another investigation and applied to other similar situations. Dependability can be used to describe how the research method can be used in another investigation. Confirmability of an investigation can refer to the verification of the findings by others.

By looking at documents and on-line information published by the schools, the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of the responses given in interviews can be verified. The responses were, to some extent, the opinions of the senior teachers, but they were representing the schools and the views on homework.

Trustworthiness in Quantitative Research

Trustworthiness will depend on a number of factors including the clarity of the research questions, the rigour and transparency with which the data is collected and analysed and what conclusions are reached. Those results should be able to be externally and independently verified. Lincoln and Gubba (1985 p290) posed four questions: How the confidence of the findings is established, are those findings applicable to other contexts, can the

findings be repeated if the research was replicated and the degree to which the participants are not influenced by the researcher. Anyone reading the report must be confident that the findings and conclusions are as accurate as possible.

Reliability and Validity in Quantitative Research

De Vaus (2002) described reliability as the same question being answered in the same way on a number of occasions. One way of making sure a question is reliable is careful wording of a question to eliminate any ambiguity. Blaxter *et al* (2010) stated that a study is reliable if it was to be undertaken again by another researcher then similar results would be achieved. Matthews and Ross (2010) supported this by stating that if the same research was carried out by the same researcher again or by different researchers the results would be similar. Best (2012:6) stated that a study can be claimed to be reliable if "the research design can be repeated or replicated".

De Vaus (2002) explained that validity is a question that measures what it is intended to measure. Blaxter *et al* (2010:245) explained validity as "whether your methods, approaches and techniques actually relate to, or measure, the issues you have been exploring". Matthews and Ross (2010) also added that a study is regarded as valid if the data gathered closely represents that aspect of education being researched. Best (2012) described validity as how relevant the data collected was to the final study and did the data measure what was expected in the study.

The pilot study enabled the reliability of the questionnaires to be test thoroughly so that the researcher could ensure that, as far as possible, all the respondents in each group understood the questions in the same way. Where there was ambiguity, questions were rephrased and tested again. It is important to be rigorous and transparent in data collection and data

analysis. Research should be planned and designed and should be transparent for anyone to scrutinise at any time.

3.8 Analytical framework

An analytical framework is the framework against which data can be compared and systematically interpreted and evaluated.

Best (2012) described analysis as explaining the data collected and drawing a conclusion to explain the findings. Matthews and Ross described the purpose of data analysis as

"to describe, discuss, evaluate and explain the content and characteristics of the data that has been collected."

(Matthews and Ross, 2010 p317)

They stated that all data included in the analysis is treated in the same way and that the research question should be revisited throughout the study and must be answered.

The data from the documents and interviews were analysed through the themes that emerged and then discussed in relation to the key questions asked at the start of the study:

- What is the purpose of homework?
- What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?
- Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?

- What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

3.9 Ethics

3.9.1 Ethical guidelines

Research at all levels is subject to ethical approval, which must be completed before research is undertaken. This is to ensure that all those involved in the research are not put at risk and that they understand all that is involved in the process. This study followed the ethical guidelines as outlined by The British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) and The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (2009).

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (2009) described ethics as

“Research ethics refers to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond.”

(ESRC, 2009 p7)

ESRC (2009) has set out six key ethical principles which it expects research to take account of. These being:

- All aspects of the research should ensure integrity and quality. In the current research all those involved knew that the research undertaken was conducted with commitment and accountability throughout.
- All those involved in the research should be fully informed and about the purpose of the research, the methods undertaken to collect

information and how this information could possibly be used. This principle underlines informed consent and that participants make an informed decision based on all facts given that they consent to being involved in the research. This also includes awareness of any potential risk when participants are under the age of 16 the consent would be given for them to take part in the research by an appropriate adult responsible for that minor. In the current study all participants gave their consent and the school consented to the questionnaires being given out in the school.

- Confidentiality is respected and participants should be ensured that they will not be identified and that their input will be kept in confidence. The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out principles for handling data which is fair to those concerned and protects their rights. All involved in research must comply with the legal requirements. The Act states that confidentiality must be upheld and that the participants are not misled or deceived into giving information. All data must be kept securely and for no longer than is necessary. It was made clear to all participants in this study that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained throughout.
- Participating in the research is voluntary and free from coercion. All participants agreed to take part in this study and understood that they could withdraw at any time.
- Harm to any participants must be avoided. This includes physical and psychological harm. Participants should feel that they are in a safe environment when taking part in the study. Participants should have the opportunity to ask any questions before taking part and during the study. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions at the start of this study.
- Conflicts of interest or partiality is made explicit. The professional integrity of all aspects of the research will be ensured including the

methods of collecting, analysing and recording the information. There should be no conflict of interest in the study. Professionalism was maintained throughout this study.

Denscombe (2010) identified four key principles which are the basis of research ethics codes. The first principle is that participants' interests are protected. Denscombe (2010) summarised this as anticipating the threats to participants in the form of privacy, intrusion, sensitivity, confidentiality and anonymity. The second principle is that participation should be voluntary and based on informed consent. Here participants should not be coerced or forced to participate and that their participation is voluntary and that they are given enough information about the study, and their involvement in it to make an informed choice of consent. The third principle is that researchers should operate in an open and honest manner with respect to the investigation and that they should avoid deception and misrepresentation, present their findings in an unbiased analysis, avoid plagiarism, demonstrate the capabilities of research and prove positive benefits of the research. The fourth and final principle is that research should comply with the law of the land and that data collection and analysis is within the law. The researchers should be aware of the intellectual rights of the data collection and that all data should be kept secure. Denscombe explained that data should be collected, analysed and stored according to legislation and that researchers should undertake the following:

- *Collect and process data in a fair and lawful manner*
- *Use data only for the purposes originally specified*
- *Collect only the data that are actually needed*
- *Take care to ensure data is accurate*
- *Keep data no longer than is necessary*
- *Keep data secure*
- *Not distribute the data*

- *Restrict access to data*
- *Keep data anonymous*

(Denscombe, 2010 p 344)

Denscombe elaborated on this by explaining that researchers must stay within the boundaries of the law when working with data and that data should be accurate and only be used for its originally intended purpose. Researchers should only collect the data specifically needed for the intended study and that any data is stored securely and only for the length of time necessary for completing the research. Data should not be passed on to any other organisations, however researchers may share information with other researchers and all data should be anonymous.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

De Vaus (2002) explained anonymity as the researcher being unable to identify a particular respondent, whereas confidentiality is making sure that no one has access to information regarding respondents or their details. It is important to the respondents and researcher that anonymity and confidentiality are maintained, as this will ensure that respondents are willing to take part knowing that their privacy will be maintained and that they will therefore give an honest answer to questions asked ensuring the quality of the response. When data has been collected confidentiality must be maintained and this can be achieved by not having any identification in research collected data and individual information cannot be tracked back to a particular school

Informed Consent

All participants in research must be given relevant information so that they can make an informed decision to take part in the study or not. It is up to the researcher to make sure that the participants are given the necessary

information and presented in a way that the study is explained and any questions they may have are explained fully. Based on this information the participants can then agree to take part and indicate that they understand what they are taking part in and what their rights are and their consent given. ESRC (2009) described informed consent as

“entails giving as much information as possible about the research so that prospective participants can make an informed decision on their possible involvement. Typically, this information should be provided in written form and signed off by the research subjects.”

(ESRC, 2009 p24)

Ethical approval was sought and approved before starting this study. The University of Bedfordshire Institute for Research in Education Ethics panel requires all researchers to complete documentation outlining the proposed research study and submit it to the panel for scrutiny and approval. No research can take place without this approval.

The head teacher, acting in loco parentis, in line with school policy concerning the gathering of data provided the necessary permission for questionnaires to be distributed to students under the age of sixteen.

“In the case of participants whose age, intellectual capability or other vulnerable circumstance may limit the extent to which they can be expected to understand or agree voluntarily to undertake their role, researchers must fully explore alternative ways in which they can be enabled to make authentic responses. In such circumstances, researchers

must also seek the collaboration and approval of those who act in guardianship or as 'responsible others.'

(BERA, 2011 p6)

As students were under the age of 16 the head teacher acted as gatekeeper and consent was not only be obtained from the students but also the head teacher.

All questionnaires included consent questions which were completed by all participants agreeing that they had the opportunity to ask questions, that their questions were answered satisfactorily, they read and understood the information given to them and they consented to completing the questionnaire. The questionnaires contained a further level of permission informing the respondents of their right to withdraw from the study at that point up to the end of the data collection period. Every attempt was made to ensure that no participant was put under any degree of stress in relation to the study. All participants were also informed that all information collected would be anonymous through the use of pseudonyms and that confidentiality would be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools.

3.10 Study Design

The design of this study compromised two parts, the pilot study followed by the main study.

3.10.1 Pilot study

Through personal contact, the head teacher of the chosen school was approached to ask if it would be possible to conduct the study at the school. It was agreed that this could be carried out at the school. The qualitative research method adopted for this study was the study of documentary

evidence, as it was readily available and, as a primary source, directly connected to the study. The study examined school homework policy, how it is implemented and monitored and whether it is suitable for all involved. The school homework policy was scrutinised thematically and themes linked to the key questions asked, the purpose of homework, the homework environment and access to resources and the question of whether homework has an impact on school work and progress?

The quantitative data was derived from questionnaires. The four groups of participants were the main stakeholders at the school involved in homework, students, families, teachers and governors. Year ten students were identified for the study as they have experience of range of subjects and they were not directly involved in any external examinations at the time. The head teacher and the head of year selected a tutor group and the form teacher was willing for the class of eighteen pupils to take part in the study. All pupils in the class completed the questionnaire during a tutor session, therefore all were returned. Questionnaires were given to randomly selected twenty teaching staff at the school, only three teachers completed and returned the questionnaire (15% returned). The fourteen governors were sent a questionnaire with only two returning it (14% returned). The eighteen students taking part in the study were asked to take a questionnaire home to their families, however, only five families returned the questionnaire (28% returned). From the initial search of the literature and from personal experience, questions were chosen which included questions related to why stakeholders thought homework was set, how relevant it was to the class work, the feedback received after completing homework and whether it was felt that it made a difference to their learning. With small numbers in each group involved in the study their responses could be manually entered onto an excel spreadsheet and analysed.

3.10.2 Main study

The main study followed the same pattern as the pilot study but took place in six schools instead of one. As with the pilot study, the qualitative information was collected from school documents and policies, and the school website was also included in the main study.

Following the pilot study, and further literature review, questions for questionnaires were reviewed, evaluated and modified. (Appendix 23, 24, 25 and 26). For the main study an interview with a senior teacher, in each school, with responsibility for the curriculum and homework, was introduced in order to gain information about the school policy and the rationale for writing the school policy and for setting homework (Appendix 28).

Investigation of key documents was considered in more detail and information on school websites and key documents available to families, teachers, governors and students were compared and discussed. All schools had documents relating to homework and information available on their website. The range of documents related to homework included diaries, policies, guides and agreements. Although all schools had documents related to homework, no two schools had the same combination of documents and they used the documents in a slightly different way to each other. The documents and interviews were analysed by key themes which emerged and these were compared across the six schools.

The modified questionnaires was sent to 165 students and 135 were returned (82% returned), 165 families and sixty nine were returned (42% returned), 720 teachers and fifty two were returned (7% returned), and eighty one governors and sixteen were returned (20% returned), at the six schools (table 6:1). There was a higher percentage of students completing questionnaires

in the pilot study as one of the schools in the main study gave the questionnaires to the students and asked them to return them, and some did not return them. Whereas the students in the pilot study and the other main study schools all completed the questionnaires in school and therefore all were returned. In all cases there was a reliance on the schools giving out and collecting the questionnaires and therefore there was a varied response rate. As with the pilot study the information collected in the questionnaire was analysed using an excel spread sheet.

Following the pilot study and further literature review the main study questionnaires were themed. For each participant group the questions were asked in connection with their views on the value of homework, the completion of homework, punishments for non-completion of homework, resources for completing homework and homework policy and in the case of the teachers they were asked questions in relation to planning homework. Over twice as many questions were asked of each group in the main study compared with the pilot study as it was found that more details were needed, in particular related to the home environment and resources needed in order to complete homework. Similar questions were asked of each group in order to analyse and compare responses.

3.11 Strengths and Constraints of the Research Design

The strengths and constraints of the current study are identified and discussed in detail in section 8.3. The strengths included the originality in the choice of participant groups and the rigour and transparency of data collection from the participating schools. Constraints were identified as including the size of the sample and the reliance of the schools and participants to complete the questionnaires.

3.12 Summary

The full research design can be seen in figure 3.1 in summary the methods comprised:

Qualitative: Documentary analysis in the form of school policy, web sites, home-school agreement and guidance on homework given to families and students. Interviews with senior teachers at the school with responsibility for the curriculum and homework.

Quantitative: Questionnaires to the four main stakeholders, governors, teachers, families and students.

The ontology of this study was in part realist and in part constructivist. The epistemological position reflected the ontology and was therefore interpretative and also quantitative and statistical. The research methods used in this study included qualitative and quantitative research methods. These involved planning, undertaking, evaluating, analysing and reviewing each method used, documents, interviews and questionnaires. The advantages and disadvantages of each method were discussed. The reliability and validity of questions and methods used for the realist aspect of the study were considered and the trustworthiness of the qualitative aspects were taken into account as well as ethical considerations. The results of the research methods used in this study are described in later chapters.

Chapter 4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: THE TOWN AND THE SCHOOLS AND NATURE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the town and schools chosen for this investigation. It is important to understand the context in which the investigation of homework was undertaken and therefore the town and schools are described and a background to each is given.

4.2 The town and the schools

The study was conducted at six schools located in a town in the South East England. The New Towns Act of 1946 planned to move 750 000 residents out of London and into existing towns and new towns to be established within fifty miles of London. The Ministry of Housing and Local Governments considered it necessary to establish a new town to provide accommodation for 150,000 Londoners over a period of twenty years, increasing eventually to a population of 250,000. The location was decided upon as it was equidistant between a number of major towns and cities. The town was designated a New Town in the 1960s to relieve the pressure of housing in London. The new town incorporated three existing towns and a number of villages. The plan for the development of the town was known as "The Master Plan" and was based on six guiding principles:

- Opportunity and freedom of choice
- Easy movement and access
- Balance and variety
- The creation of an attractive city

- Public awareness
- Efficient and imaginative use of resources

The plan included open spaces, local facilities, health centres, libraries, leisure facilities, pedestrian walk ways, shops, underpasses and bridges. The plan saw the town as self-contained with people living and working in the area without the need to commute elsewhere. The plan was for space and the town was to be low density and predominantly green with no building higher than three stories except for the town centre. The town was built on a road grid at one kilometre intervals with many roads built as dual carriage ways to ease congestion.

In 1969 the population was under 43,000 and by the 2011 census the population had risen to nearly 250,000. In the 1970s less than 700 houses each year were being built which rose to over 2800 by the 1990s. The original plan was for 80 per cent of the houses to be owner occupied and for only 41 per cent of the total area of the town to be residential development. Between 2001 and 2011 the town was regarded as in the top ten areas of the country with the fastest growth. The town has a mixed economy with the main industry being the service industry and attracting international companies. The population ranges from fairly affluent districts to areas of social and economic disadvantage. According to the 2011 census the majority of the population is white (78 per cent) and is below the national average for age of population.

The school census returns in January 2013 and January 2014 showed an increase in the number of students attending schools in the town from just over 42,000 to just over 43,000 and an increase in teachers from approximately 2,700 to approximately 2,800. The number of students had increased from approximately 32,500 in 2005. There are over one hundred

schools in the town of which around 10 per cent are secondary schools, nearly 89 per cent were primary schools, the other schools included specialist schools, pupil referral units and nursery schools.

Table 4.1: Profile of schools in the town. 2013-14 School Performance and Achievement Report

Nursery Schools	Special Schools
Infant Schools	Special Academy
Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Junior Schools	Pupil Referral Unit
Primary Academy	Secondary Academies

The number of students on roll at the secondary schools in the town in 2013 - 2014 ranged from just under 700 to over 2000 and each secondary school offered sixth form provision.

As many of the schools were built after the 1970s they are all comprehensive. All secondary schools are co-educational with slightly more boys than girls. Two of the secondary schools have opened since 2000. The Labour government's education policy would not permit new secondary schools to be built which were not comprehensive. Most schools have a specialist subject status.

According the School Performance and Achievement Report for the town published in 2014 the percentage of students from minority ethnic groups in 2014 was below the national average with around 37 per cent of all school students coming from minority ethnic backgrounds, an increase from 35 per cent in 2013. Since 2005 the Black African group had the largest increase in student numbers with the Asian Other Group having the highest growth rate while White British had the highest decrease. The number of students

eligible for free school meals was below the national average and the attendance of secondary school students was in line with the national average. Any excluded secondary students were educated at an alternative provision in the town.

Although schools have their own admissions policy, the local authority coordinates the admissions process between November and February. Parents complete and return either an online application form, or a paper application form indicating three preferred schools they wish their child to attend. Parents are given a deadline for the application to be made. Parents are encouraged to visit the secondary schools on specific open days and evenings before making the choice of three schools. The application information is sent to schools who will use the set criteria to offer places. The parents and students are informed as to which school they have been allocated in March and have fourteen days in which to accept the offer or appeal the decision. Each secondary school has a specific catchment area and feeder primary schools apart from the faith school which covers the whole town. Although the criteria for admission to each school is slightly different it is based on the following:

1. Looked after children
2. Children who live in the catchment area with a sibling at the school at the date of admission.
3. Students living in the catchment area.
4. Students attending a feeder school.
5. Students living outside the catchment area with a sibling at the school at the date of admission

Around 90 per cent of students attend a secondary school of their first choice compared to the national average of 85 per cent. There is some student

mobility between schools due to families moving around the town. The average mobility across all secondary schools is approximately 7 per cent. Approximately 5 per cent of children living in the town are educated in other areas.

New schools are planned for the town and will be built to accommodate a rising school population of approximately 150 to approximately 250 students in each year group and schools will be built and designed to meet local community needs as well as the town needs.

In 2013 the town published its education plan to improve the standards of schools in the town including Ofsted inspections and exam results. It had been implementing an improvement plan since 2010 and there had been an improvement in some areas with GCSE results going up from approximately 51 per cent 5+ GCSEs in 2010 to approximately 60 per cent in 2014. The Local Authority (LA) recognised that in order for schools to improve they did need support, so the LA identified local National Leaders in Education (NLEs) and Local Leaders in Education (LLEs) who would support their schools. Two of the secondary schools also had Teaching School Status and formed alliances of schools to support each other. To oversee this plan the LA established the Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board (SSEPB). Through their review the LA identified activities and services which would support continued development and improvement including streamlining the LA support for schools, targeted training and professional development, governor support, the support of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), supporting newly appointed head teachers and safeguarding guidance and training. The LA also supported the improvement in behaviour in schools through the Secondary Behaviour Partnership with all secondary schools supporting an alternative provision for those students excluded from, or on track of exclusion from mainstream schools. Alongside this is the drive to

improve school attendance as it was below the average for neighbouring local authorities. The LA monitored and supported schools through Improvement Partners who acted as the LA representatives in visiting schools on a regular basis depending on the amount of support required. The governing body of the school has responsibility for the overall strategic direction of the school. The school is expected to take responsibility for self-regulation and self monitoring and through their leadership teams to bring in support when needed. This support was in the form of NLEs, who may take on the responsibility of acting or interim head teacher, supporting an existing head teacher or provide consultancy support. LLEs would support through coaching and mentoring and advising on documents, policies and procedures. Both NLEs and LLEs are experienced head teachers. Subject Leaders in Education (SLEs) are outstanding, experienced middle or senior teachers and could support with subject and curriculum related issues.

Table 4.2: Approximate number of students per year group as at Jan 2014.

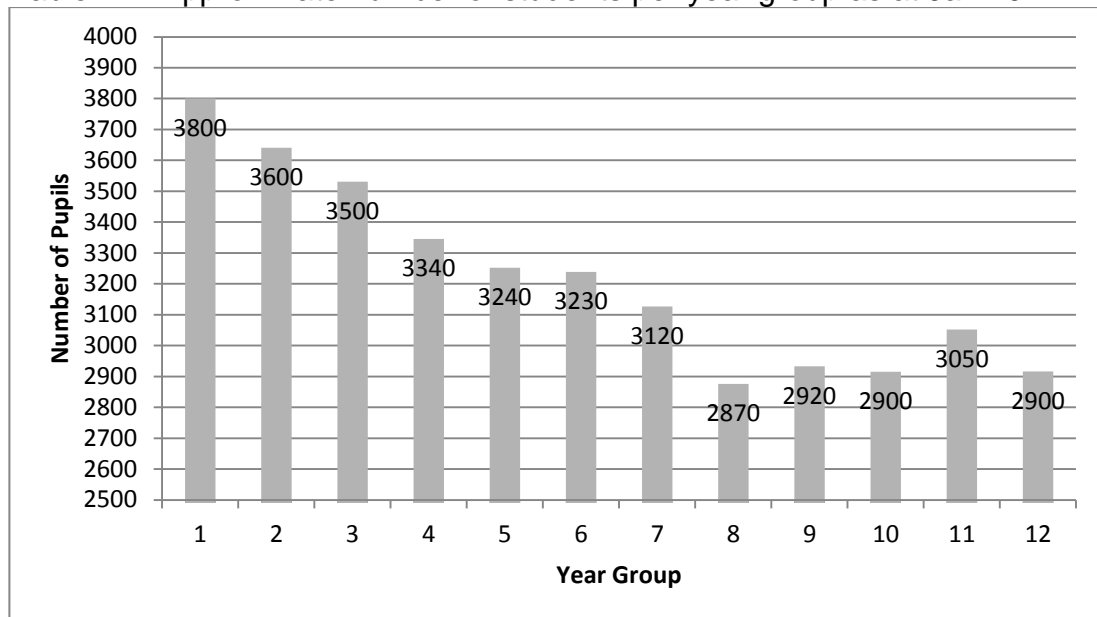


Table 4.2 shows the number of students in each year group in the town in January 2014. There was a strong indication that there was an increase in student numbers through the year groups and that each year the year group size would increase as the town grows. It is anticipated that by 2019 an additional 10000 school places will be needed in the town across all age phases. The building of seven new schools has started and there will be phased development over the next few years across the town.

Table 4.3 : School Population. DfE 2015a

School name	Number of students on roll	Number of boys on roll	Number of girls on roll	Percentage of students with SEN statements or on School Action Plus	Percentage of students with English not as a first language	Percentage of students eligible for free school meals
England - national (secondary state-funded)	3181361	1601177 (50.32%)	1580184 (49.67%)	7.40%	14.30%	15.70%
Local Authority (secondary state-funded)	17500	8800 (50%)	8800 (50%)	5%	20%	15%
School A	1250	600 (49%)	650 (51%)	15%	35%	30%
School B	2200	1100 (50%)	1100 (50%)	5%	5%	5%
School C	1800	900 (50%)	900 (50%)	5%	40%	10%
School D	1500	800 (53%)	700 (47%)	5%	15%	10%
School E	2000	1000 (50%)	1000 (50%)	10%	20%	20%
School F	1500	730 (49%)	770 (51%)	5%	10%	10%

Table 4.3 shows the composition of the schools in the study. The schools are identified throughout the study as School A, B, C, D or E

Table 4.4: Key Stage 4 Cohort. DfE 2015a

School	Number of students at the end of key stage 4		
	All students	Boys	Girls
England - state funded schools only	558444 Average 174	284754 Average 89	273690 Average 85
Local Authority	2850 Average 260	1450 Average 132	1400 Average 128
School A	210	100	110
School B	350	190	160
School C	260	130	130
School D	230	120	110
School E	360	190	170
School F	200	90	110

Table 4.4 shows the approximate number of students at the schools in the age range investigated in this study. The national average for students in this year group is below the average for the local authority and for all the schools in the study. In the case of two of the schools the national cohort average is less than half the size of the two schools. Of the five schools in the study two are above the local authority average, one is in line with it and three schools are below the average.

Table 4.5: Key Stage 4 Results. DfE 2015a

School	per cent achieving 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent)
England - state funded schools only	65.50 per cent
Local Authority - state funded schools only	60 per cent
School A	50 per cent
School B	75 per cent
School C	60 per cent
School D	75 per cent
School E	50 per cent
School F	70 per cent

In November 2014 the town published the 2013 - 2014 School Performance and Achievement Report. On 29 January 2015 the Department for Education published their 2013 - 2014 statistical data collected on schools (Table 4.5). The report showed the Key Stage outcomes of students in the town compared with the regional statistics and national statistics. The 5+ grade A* to C GCSEs results had risen from approximately 50 per cent in 2010 to approximately 60 per cent in 2013 which was above the national average of 60.6 per cent in state schools in England (Table 4.6). The results at the individual schools ranged from approximately 50 per cent to approximately 80 per cent 5+ A* to C GCSEs grades with half the secondary schools above the national average. However this changed in 2014 with the local authority schools 5+ A* to C GCSEs results approximately 60 per cent which was below the national average for state schools in England of 65.50 per cent. The results for schools also changed with the range between approximately 30 per cent and approximately 80 per cent with more than half the secondary schools above the national average.

Table 4.6: Key Stage 4 Results incl. English and Mathematics. DfE 2015a

School	per cent achieving 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Mathematics			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
England - state funded schools only	58.2%	58.8%	60.6%	56.6%
Local Authority - state funded schools only	50%	60%	60%	50%
School A	20%	40%	50%	40%
School B	65%	80%	80%	65%
School C	60%	60%	55%	50%
School D	70%	75%	70%	50%
School E	40%	55%	50%	40%
School F	65%	60%	65%	50%

Table 4.7: School Staff. DfE 2015d

School	Teachers	Teaching Assistants	Support Staff	Ratio of Students to Teachers	Ratio of Students to Teaching Assistants	Ratio of Students to Support Staff	Ratio of Teachers to Teaching Assistants	Ratio of Teachers to Support Staff
England - state funded secondary schools only	73	21	28	15:1	80:1	NDA	3:1	0.6:1
Local Authority - state funded secondary schools only	103	35	45	15:1	42:1	32:1	3:1	2:1
School A	100	35	50	14:1	36:1	25:1	3:1	2:1
School B	140	30	60	17:1	73:1	37:1	5:1	2:1
School C	130	70	55	14:1	26:1	33:1	2:1	2:1
School D	110	45	45	16:1	33:1	33:1	2:1	2:1
School E	130	35	60	16:1	57:1	33:1	4:1	2:1
School F	110	15	60	14:1	100:1	25:1	7:1	2:1

Table 4.7 shows the national and local authority ratio of students to teachers in state secondary schools is 15:1 and this is in line with the ratio found in the schools in this study as they range from 14:1 to 17:1. The average number of teachers in a state school in England is 73, however, the local authority average is 103. Although one school is just below the local authority average all the others are above with three schools over the national average by 60 teachers and the local authority by 40 teachers. The school and local authority class sizes are in line with national figures. This can be seen in table 4.4 where the average number of students in school in England at the end of key stage 4 is approximately 174 whereas the local authority and the schools in the study have an average of approximately 260 students. The number of teaching assistants and support staff is also higher in the local authority and in the schools than the national data.

Table 4.8 outlines the student's absence data for the schools in the study compared with the local authority and national data. Apart from one school, all are in line with the local authority and national average. Nationally 77.8 per cent of all absences were authorised and the majority of these were illness or medical appointments. 22.2 per cent of all absences were unauthorised and were not sanctioned by the school, these included arriving to school late and a family holiday not agreed with the school. It was seen nationally that absence rates have fallen since 2010 from 6.7 per cent to 5.1 per cent (DfE, 2015b), although it did increase slightly from 2013 when it was 4.9 per cent. According to DfE (2015c:5) "All maintained schools are required to provide two possible sessions per day, morning and afternoon, to all pupils." and "Schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils."

Table 4.8: Student Absence Data. DfE 2015b

School name	Overall absence
England - national (secondary state-funded)	5.1%
Local Authority (secondary state-funded)	5%
School A	6%
School B	5%
School C	4%
School D	5%
School E	8%
School F	5%

Staff absence data is published in the DfE 2015d publication, "School Workforce England: November 2014". It was reported that in 2013 - 2014 55 per cent of teachers in England had at least one day off work through illness with the average number of days lost as 7.9 days. The schools in this study ranged from approximately 59 per cent to approximately 81 per cent of staff having at least one day off due to illness with the average number of days between approximately 6 and approximately 10 days as shown in table 4.9

Table 4.9: School Staff Absence. DfE 2015d

School	per cent of teachers with at least one day of sickness absence	Average number of days lost to teacher sickness absence
School A	59%	10
School B	77%	10
School C	65%	7
School D	62%	7
School E	81%	9
School F	69%	6
National	55%	8

4.3 School A

School A opened in the early 2000s on the site of a former secondary school and is located near the centre of the town. The school is sponsored and has specialist, and academy status. It is a larger than average secondary school with over 1200 students with 49 per cent boys and 51 per cent girls. In 2014 all applicants to the school were offered a place. The school can accommodate approximately 100 students more in year seven and will be able to increase this by approximately 100 more in 2018. Approximately 33 per cent of students are from a minority ethnic background and half of these are of African heritage. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs, is above the local and national average at approximately 15 per cent. The number of students supported by Pupil Premium is well above average and this includes students eligible for free school meals, students with a parent in the armed forces and students in local authority care. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is approximately 30 per cent which is well above the national and local authority averages. The percentage of students with English as an additional language is also well above the national and local authority averages, at approximately 35 per cent. The school absence rate is approximately 6 per cent compared with the national average of 5.1 per cent and the local authority average of approximately 5 per cent (Table 4.8). The school GCSE results are below average with approximately 50 per cent achieving 5+ A* to C grades. There are approximately 90 teachers, 35 teaching assistants and 45 support staff at the school and the student to teachers ratio is 14:1 compared with the national average of 15:1 (Table 4.7). The school had been graded three, satisfactory, in a previous Ofsted inspection but had been graded at two, good, in the latest inspection. The most recent Ofsted Inspection report stated that teaching was good and that teachers plan learning to capture the interest of the students. Students make good progress and achieve well,

particularly in English. The behaviour at the school is good and students respect the teachers and other students and they feel safe at the school. The leadership at the school was seen as outstanding and that improvements have been made in achievement, teaching and behaviour and that they have a vision to improve further. The governing body supports the school and has good knowledge and understanding of the school and will challenge the school leaders about the performance of the school.

4.4 School B

School B is based in one of the original villages to the north of the town. This larger than average school was opened in the early 1960s and expanded in the early 2000s. It has specialist college and academy status. The school has a number of recognitions including the Continuing Professional Development and International School Awards. It also holds the Healthy Schools Award and has achieved Investors in People status. Based to the north of the town, the school covers a partially rural catchment area. It is an oversubscribed school. In 2014 there were three applicants for every two places with approximately 200 more applicants than places available. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is below average at approximately 5 per cent. Students supported by Pupil Premium is well below average and this includes students eligible for free school meals, students with a parent in the armed forces and students in local authority care. Those eligible for free school meals is at approximately 5 per cent which is below the national and local authority averages. The percentage of students with English as an additional language is also well below the national average at 4.80 per cent. The school absence rate is approximately 5 per cent and is in line with the national and the local authority averages (Table 4.8). The school GCSE results are above average with approximately 75 per cent achieving 5+ A* to C grades. There are approximately 2200 students at the school, 50 per cent are boys and 50 per

cent are girls. There are approximately 130 teachers, 35 teaching assistants and 60 support staff at the school and the students to teachers ratio is approximately 17:1 which is higher rate than the national average of 15:1 (Table 4.7). The school has been graded two, good, in the latest Ofsted inspection. The Ofsted Inspection Report stated that the majority of teaching was good and some was outstanding. Most teachers plan lessons including a wide range of activities to stimulate the learners. Behaviour was particular good and students were courteous and respectful. The school leaders had a good understanding of the school and how to make further improvements. Communication at all levels, between school leaders and staff was seen as a good although improvements could be made in communication with families.

4.5 School C

School C is a larger than average secondary school and is the only faith school in the town. As well as becoming a designated training school, the school also gained specialist status. It is an oversubscribed school, in 2014 there were three applicants for every two places and it is anticipated that this number will increase by 2018. There are approximately 1800 students at the school, 50 per cent boys and approximately 50 per cent are girls. There are approximately 130 teachers, 70 teaching assistants and 50 support staff, with the ratio of students to teachers at approximately 15:1, which is in line with the national average (Table 4.7). The number of students with special educational needs is approximately 5 per cent which is in line with the local authority average and they are supported in specialist units. Some students also attend a Pupil Referral Unit. The school also receives additional funding for a few year seven and eight students. These students had not reached the expected level four at the end of Key Stage Two. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is below average at approximately 10 per cent. The number of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average at approximately 40 per cent. The number of students from

minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher than the national average with the majority of these students from Black African backgrounds. The school absence rate is approximately 5 per cent and is below the national average and in line with the local authority average (Table 4.8). The school GCSE results are below the national average but in line with the local authority average with approximately 60 per cent achieving 5+ A* to C. The school had been graded three, requires improvement, in the latest Ofsted inspection compared with the previous inspection when it was graded as outstanding. The Ofsted Inspection Report stated the strengths of the school as good attendance and students felt safe at school. The specialist units were seen as good and there was good integration into school with student progress good to outstanding. To improve the school would need to ensure that teaching was well planned, consistent and challenging and that subject leaders and school leaders should be more involved in monitoring this.

4.6 School D

School D is a large secondary school on the western side of the town. The school opened in the late 1990s with approximately 1700 students. The school developed and grew over a number of years. The school is a subject specialist school, a teaching school and has academy status. Through the role of Teaching School it supports other schools in the area. It is an oversubscribed school, in 2014 there were three applicants for every place. It is anticipated that the year seven intake could increase by approximately 20 per cent by 2018. The number of students on roll is approximately 1500 with 53 per cent boys and 47 per cent girls. There are approximately 100 teachers, 40 teaching assistants and 40 support staff and the ratio of approximately 16:1 students to teachers which is above the national average of 15 (Table 4.7). The majority of students are white British and from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is below average at approximately 5

per cent. Students supported by Pupil Premium is well below average and this includes students eligible for free school meals, students with a parent in the armed forces and students in local authority care. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is approximately 10 per cent and below the national and local authority averages. The percentage of students with English as an additional language is just above the national average but below the local authority average at approximately 15 per cent. The school absence rate is approximately 5 per cent and in line with the national and local authority averages (Table 4.8). The school GCSE results are above average with approximately 75 per cent achieving 5+ A* to C grades. The school had been graded one, outstanding, in the previous Ofsted inspection and as two, good, in the latest. The Ofsted Inspection Report stated that leaders have high expectations of staff and students and that they have worked effectively to close the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and other students. Teaching staff receive effective professional development opportunities to support classroom practice. Behaviour at the school was seen as exemplary and students felt safe at the school. The governing body has an understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for further development.

4.7 School E

School E is a larger than average school in the North of the town and was opened in the 1970s. The school gained specialist subject status in two areas. The majority of the students live near the school and come from a full range of social and economic backgrounds and the catchment area consists of privately owned and rented accommodation. The school has specialist provision for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) students. In 2014 all applicants to the school were offered a place although the school can accommodate more students in year seven. The majority of students are white British and only approximately 20 per cent of the students do not have

English as their first language which is in line with the local authority average. The number of students on roll is approximately 2000 with 50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls. There are approximately 150 teachers, 45 teaching assistants and 65 support staff and the ratio of approximately 14:1 students to teachers which is below the national average. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is above average at approximately 10 per cent. Students supported by Pupil Premium is above average and this includes students eligible for free school meals, students with a parent in the armed forces and students in local authority care. Approximately 10 per cent of the students in year seven receive additional funding to support their learning as they did not achieve the required level at Key Stage Two. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is approximately 20 per cent which is higher than the national and local authority averages. The percentage of students with English as an additional language is above the national average and the local authority average at approximately 20 per cent. The school absence rate is approximately 10 per cent and is above the national average and the local authority averages. The school GCSE results are above average with approximately 50 per cent achieving 5+ A* to C. The school has been graded three, requires improvement, in the latest Ofsted inspection following a previous inspection when it was also graded as three. The Ofsted Inspection Report stated that the school had made improvements since the last inspection in some subjects and that the curriculum suited the student's needs.

4.8 School F

School F is a larger than average secondary school on the southeast side of the town in an affluent catchment area and was opened in 2000 with approximately 100 students at the school. It has specialist subject and academy status. There are approximately 1500 students at the school with 49 per cent of them boys and 51 per cent girls. There are approximately 110

teachers, 15 teaching assistants and 60 support staff and the ratio of approximately 13:1 students to teachers which is below the national average (Table 4.7). It is an oversubscribed school, in 2014 there were two applicants for every place. There is a lower than average number of students with English as an additional language, approximately 10 per cent. Although many ethnic groups attend the school, the majority are white British. The number of students with special educational needs or disabilities is below average at approximately 5 per cent. The number of students supported by Pupil Premium is below average and this includes students eligible for free school meals, students with a parent in the armed forces and students in local authority care. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is approximately 10 per cent and lower than the national and local authority averages. A number of students with lower than expected Key Stage Two levels in Reading or Mathematics are supported with addition funding. The school absence rate is approximately 5 per cent and is below the national average and in line with the local authority average (Table 4.8). The school GCSE results are above average with approximately 70 per cent achieving 5+ A* to C grades. The school had been graded one, outstanding, in a previous Ofsted inspection and was graded as two, good in the latest inspection. The Ofsted Inspection Report stated that students made good progress at Key Stage three and four. Most teaching was seen as at least good and that teachers had good subject knowledge and they planned and delivered interesting lessons. School leaders have a good understanding of the school and monitor teaching and achievement. Behaviour was seen as good and students were polite and courteous.

4.9 Summary

As Hallam (2006) commented, the context can be an important consideration in understanding the way in which school policy documents on homework are developed and maintained. Information has been presented in this chapter

not only for each school but for the local authority and nationally. This information is used in future chapters to explain and support the analysis and interpretation of the information examined in the school documents, interviews with senior teachers, and questionnaires.

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Chapter 5 FINDINGS - SCHOOL DOCUMENTS AND INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews outcomes from two sources of qualitative data related to homework in the six schools:

- the school documents related to homework, school policy and the home-school agreement.
- the interviews conducted with a senior member of staff at the school who had responsibility for overseeing the homework policy and the implementation of the policy on a day to day basis. As the first interviewees requested that they were not recorded so a decision was made not to record any interviews.

Schools had a range of documents related to homework and these included policies, guides and agreements. Some information was available on the school websites and was shared with students and their parents. Other information was available in homework diaries or home-school agreements. Different schools use a range of documents and no two schools use the documents in the same way, however, all had information available.

The data from the documents and interviews was analysed through the themes that emerged and then discussed in relation to the key questions asked at the start of the study:

- What is the purpose of homework?
- What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?

- Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?
- What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

Data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and coded using the terms Differentiation, Documentation, Economic, Educational, Equity, Future of homework, Home environment, ICT, Political, Sanctions, Social and Type. The themed data was compared across schools.

		Differentiation	Documentation	Economic	Educational	Equity	Future of homework	Home environment	ICT	Political	Purpose	Sanctions	Social	Type
1	School 1	1	1	1	6	3	2	1	3	1	0	1	2	1
2	School 2	1	1	2	7	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	School 3	1	3	6	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
4	School 4	1	0	6	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
5	School 5	1	1	1	6	3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
6	School 6	2	0	2	6	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	1

The material from the published school documents and interviews were looked at together and in order to substantiate the themes, excerpts and quotations are included.

5.2 School A

School context

The school was a larger than average, undersubscribed, sponsored specialist academy. The school had been graded three, satisfactory, in a previous Ofsted inspection but had been graded at two, good, in the latest inspection. There was reference to homework in the school documents including a home-school agreement, a Home Learning Policy and all information could be found

on the website. Information about homework was also collected from the Vice Principal through interviews and discussion.

Themes emerging from the data

The themes that emerged from the documents and interviews in this school clearly reflected some of the political, economic, social and educational factors within the context in which the school operated:

- a. reliance on Information and Communications Technology (ICT):
 - to make public the approach to homework in part, perhaps. Influenced by the need to ensure the public were aware of the efforts to improve standards of student achievement;
 - to enable families and students access to the homework online;
 - to involve parents and families in monitoring students' engagement with their homework, thus reflecting the current high focus, nationally, on parental and family involvement;
- b. deliberate attempt by the school to ensure equity between students, so that all students had access through the website to information required to complete homework tasks, including:
 - access to the Online Curriculum site;
 - access to the homework calendar;
 - an appropriate setting in which homework could be completed;
 - support from staff in the special educational needs department;
- c. Sanctions managed by subjects.
- d. differentiation of homework by subject area and student achievement levels;
- e. shared documentation relating to homework:
 - clearly stated in the Home Learning agreement was what was expected by parents in supporting their children and the rationale underpinning the setting of homework, reflecting the school's political agenda;

- the required home-school agreement stating what was expected from parents, the school and the students, including statements regarding homework;
 - the maintenance of individual students homework planners. This finding was replicated in all the other schools, perhaps indicating the systematisation of homework across schools generally;
 - The school stated that the purpose of homework was to develop independent skills.
- f. some on-going investigation into alternative and creative ways of setting homework.

School documents

The school communicated openly with students, families, teachers and governors in what was expected to be undertaken not only in the daily curriculum but also in homework. It shared on the school website information about the Home Learning Policy, the Home Academy Agreement. It also gave all parents equal access to the Online Curriculum Site that allowed them to access their children's academic progress in all subjects. It also gave access to the academy homework calendar. The Home-Learning Policy outlined the reasons for setting homework, roles and responsibilities of all involved and how the school and home could work together. Homework was set to support the students in learning effectively on their own and to develop independent working skills. They stated in their policy that for some students, completing homework could increase their learning by three extra weeks each year and students were likely to improve their grades by undertaking this extra work.

The school set termly projects with a given number of hours for completing this work and they saw this to be at the upper end of the recommended guidelines for homework. The projects were designed for parents and

students to work together as they saw discussion supported learning but they were aware that this not always possible in some households. The projects supported the work undertaken in school and were reviewed weekly. In Key Stage three the type of work set was designed to build on literacy and numeracy skills including reading and involving the students in challenging, varied and interesting work, the work would build confidence, self-discipline and motivation and involved parents in the child's learning. At Key Stage Four and Key Stage Five the type of work set was designed to develop learning and functional skills needed in future study and employment.

The termly projects were organised and managed by the Head of the Learning Village at the school and were an integral part of the work undertaken in school. This was also explained, and the organisation of it described by the Vice Principal. Teachers monitored the work, assessed it and evaluated the impact it had on the student's progress. Parents were encouraged to support the students by discussing the work with them and offering support by suggesting activities, offering feedback and involving others in the project. The school recognised that although they encouraged families to support the children, the home environment may be busy.

Teachers support by recognising the contribution made by parents and others at home and making resources available outside school timetable hours. The projects could be seen on the school website. In years seven and eight the project should take forty-five hours over six weeks to complete and took into account the individual needs of the student. The forty-five hours were broken down into six hours literacy skills, six hours numeracy skills, nine hours reading and twenty-four hours on the project. Alongside this, parents were given suggestions on life skills, childhood experiences and places to visit to support the project. Years nine, ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen were expected to complete ninety hours private study every six weeks and this

would be coordinated by specialist teachers and the Head of Learning Village. Assessment took the form of self, peer and teacher assessment. The homework structure was monitored and evaluated by students, teachers, parents and governors.

The home-school agreement, known as the Home-Academy Agreement, reinforced the information in the Home-Learning policy. The "Online Curriculum" site on the school website was described as a safe community

"in that only students, staff, parents and governors can access the site and its resources."

It also described homework as an extension to the classroom and could be used by teachers to support students in a number of ways including providing resources, uploading homework and setting online tests. It also allowed families access to their child's file to check attendance, behaviour and achievement. Although this was still in a development stage, the school stated that it would become an invaluable online learning resource.

School interview with the Vice Principal

The school used Survey Monkey, a cloud based survey tool, and Moodle learning platform to support their homework. As stated in the school documents this gave parents access to the Online Curriculum. There was some flexibility over the type of homework set and this was organised by individual teachers and by subjects. Key Stage Three students had a planner in which they would write their homework and this could be shared with parents. Key Stage Four students had electronic access to homework and when they logged on they were able to show their parents. Individual teachers would differentiate by task and by outcome and use "all - most - some".

The school had a homework policy and this was available on their school website as the Home Learning Policy. The policy outlined the reasons for setting homework, roles and responsibilities of all involved and how school and home could work together. There was a home-school agreement available on the website. This supported the information available in the school documents.

Homework was set to support the students in learning effectively on their own and to develop independent working skills and improve grades. The Vice Principal stated that "homework improved grades and it is a case of sustainability of working towards achievement". Homework "extends what is covered at school and shows parents what the pupils are doing in class". Homework was set along the lines of projects and a timetable outlined what was expected the school documents also explained how the homework was structured. No books were sent home so alternatives had to be used.

There was a homework club based in the library until 4.30 pm each day and supervised by two members of the non-teaching staff. Those with additional needs had a homework club at lunchtime, supervised by specialist teaching staff. Departments also ran homework clubs extending the school day until 5pm and supported by teaching staff. This ensured equity between students giving them access to resources and support from staff.

Sanctions were subject and teacher based although they tried not to set too many sanctions as homework may be completed after school at school.

The school was looking into alternative and creative ways of setting homework. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was having an impact on what homework was set, however some teachers were not as comfortable in using ICT so the school would support them in developing their

skills. Students were given the opportunity to use ICT facilities at school. All sixth formers were given an "ipad" and in future years this would be rolled out over the rest of the school.

5.3 School B

School context

The school was a larger than average secondary school based in one of the villages to the north of the town and the catchment area included a partially rural area. It was an oversubscribed school with specialist subject status and academy status. The school had been graded two, good, in the latest Ofsted inspection. The school documents included a home-school agreement, Learning and Teaching Policy school prospectus and guidance for parents on the website. An interview took place with the Deputy Head Teacher to collect information about homework from the senior leadership's perspective.

Themes emerging from the data

- a. reliance on ICT:
 - to communicate information and therefore reflecting the national agenda of parental involvement:
 - to foster close links between home and school,
 - to share expectations of all stakeholders;
- b. ensuring equity so that all students had:
 - access through the website to information required to complete homework;
 - undifferentiated access to on-site information and support the completion of homework giving equal opportunities;
- c. sanctions were in place for non-completion of homework and there were expectations of support for this from home and therefore, again reflecting the current focus on student behaviour and parental/family involvement;

- d. inconsistency of differentiation across subject areas to address the different achievement levels among students;
- e. shared documentation relating to homework:
 - the Learning and Teaching policy clearly publicly outlined the reasons why homework was set;
 - a booklet was shared with parents on how to support the students;
 - the compulsory home-school agreement outlined expectations of parents and students and both parties were required to sign the document;
 - The purpose of homework was listed on the school website and therefore showed potential parents the high importance placed on homework. The website stated that homework was set to:
 - consolidate, reflect and enhance learning
 - practice study skills
 - provide the opportunity to research
 - develop organisations and time management skills
 - openly explained to all the belief in the potential of homework to develop the skills needed in learning and improving student achievement;
- f. some on-going evaluation of the efficiency of homework.

School documents

The school made all information regarding homework freely available to all stakeholders on the school website. The school did not have plans to offer electronic information about homework set or resources available in order to complete homework. On the school website there was a section describing homework and the school stated that they regarded homework as an extension of the curriculum.

The school made reference to homework in the Learning and Teaching Policy where it was explained that homework was an extension to the work in school and helped to consolidate, reflect and enhance the work. This was reiterated by the Deputy Head Teacher. It was the curriculum committee of the governing body that wrote and implemented this policy. It was designed to support students in study skills and in becoming independent learners. It gave students the opportunity to research and work creatively and develop organisational and time management skills. The policy stated that it was important to differentiate homework so that it suited the needs of individual students.

Homework included a wide variety of learning activities including writing, reading, research and revising. At Key Stage Four homework also included preparation for GCSE examinations and the preparation or completion of coursework. The time allocated to homework increased as students moved up through the school.

Information about the homework, including assessment and deadlines was on the school website for parents to access. Parents were encouraged to support their children and the website suggested ways in which they could do this, for example checking the work, listening to them reading and asking to explain their work.

Parents and teachers were encouraged to discuss any problems related to homework with each other.

The policy also explained how homework was organised. Each student had a planner in which they recorded the homework set, and time was given in the lesson for this to happen. The details were either written on the board, given verbally or written on sheets to suit different students and included the

content, the resources needed, how much was expected, the time it should take to complete, when and where it should be handed in and what support was available to the students. Subject teachers and form tutors monitored homework and checked if it was completed. Key Stage Five students were expected to take responsibility for the organisation and management of their own homework.

Teachers were expected to take home circumstances into consideration when setting homework including setting the deadlines, illness, and other family commitments. Teachers were also expected to take the ability of the students into account when setting deadlines, as the policy stated that no extensions to deadlines would be given.

So once a deadline was set including taking into consideration home circumstances that deadline must be adhered to. Sanctions were listed in the policy and were in place for the non-completion of homework these included an extension, five to ten minutes break time detention increasing to twenty to sixty minutes for more persistent infringements. This was explained by the Deputy Head Teacher.

The "Guidance for Parents for Essential Information" document outlined that the school council had devised "Golden Rules" which students should follow and number eight in the list stated that students would complete their homework on time.

The school prospectus had a section on homework and in it parents were asked to inform the school if there were problems with homework and that homework was compulsory, and the school took failure to complete it seriously.

There was a home-school agreement and the expectations of students and parents regarding homework was outlined with students expected to record the work, and complete to the best of their ability and parents expected to provide a study space at home. There was no reference in the agreement to what was expected of teachers regarding homework.

School interview with the Deputy Head Teacher

The school set homework to promote independent learning and organised homework through the student planner where the students were expected to write down their homework during the lesson. The school did not have the facility to use electronic resources to set or support homework and as explained in the school documents it did not have plans to do so.

The homework timetable was organised by the senior leadership team but the content was organised by departments with each year group having a different timetable.

Homework was mentioned in the Learning and Teaching policy on the school website, where it was stated that homework was set to support classwork through consolidation or preparation.

There was a home-school agreement in place and this was available on the school website along with information on homework and extended projects.

The homework club was available to all students including those who need additional support and was supported by non-teaching staff in the school library before and after school. This gave all students equal access to resources and support.

There were sanctions in place for those students who did not complete homework with detentions at break and lunch times organised by subject teachers and after school detentions organised by Heads of Departments and Senior Staff. Communication with parents about the detentions were through telephone calls and letters.

The school had been considering changing the homework structure and were looking at what was set, when it was set and how much was set. The school had found that setting short sharp consolidation of the classroom learning, practicing exam questions, and research works well.

Although the school documents stated that it was important to set differentiated homework, the Deputy Head Teacher explained that differentiation was not consistent between subjects, and students had the opportunity to work to their own ability through the research projects when they could answer the task through different mediums eg essay, song and video.

Students were expected to have access to a computer in order to complete some homework tasks and they did have the opportunity to use computers at school at the homework club.

The school felt that grades at Key Stage Four were supported by the additional work completed outside school and they also found that there was an improvement in individual learning skills. The Deputy Head Teacher with responsibility for homework stated in interview that "Those students that do homework in KS4 work harder and do get better grades". The member of staff also stated that it was important to give feedback in order to maintain motivation: "Students who do homework well are already motivated to do it. Students lose motivation if homework is set but not collected or marked."

5.4 School C

School context

A larger than average, oversubscribed, secondary school and was the only faith school in the town. The school was a designated training school, and had also gained specialist status. The school had been graded three, requires improvement, in the latest Ofsted inspection compared with the previous inspection when it was graded as outstanding. The school documents included a home-school agreement, an Independent Learning Policy and a School Prospectus. All documents were on the school website and related to homework. Information about homework at the school was collected through interview with the Deputy Head teacher.

Themes emerging from the data

- a. reliance on ICT:
 - to involve parents and families in monitoring students' engagement with their homework, as in School A;
 - to enable students to access homework tasks;
- b. ensuring equity between students, to enable students to access homework information;
- c. graduated sanctions outlined for non-homework completion and therefore promoting student behaviour;
- d. access to on-site resources and a school location to support the completion of homework differentiated by students' individual needs and, by subject, in relation to mathematics. The latter appeared to reflect a central government focus on raising numeracy levels;
- e. shared documentation relating to homework:
 - the embedding of the homework in the Independent Learning policy, reflecting a current educational view on the improvement of student achievement;

- a clearly stated published rationale underpinning the use of homework;
 - an informal understanding that homework was needed to fulfil curriculum needs;
 - The purpose of homework was clearly explained in the Independent Learning Policy:
 - to develop academic progress
 - to promote independent learning
 - to reinforce and consolidate classwork
 - to raise parental awareness of the work covered in school and strengthen home school links
 - to prepare for classwork
 - to undertake research
- f. there was no future intention to discontinue homework as it was needed to cover curriculum content;

School documents

The school communicates openly and shares on the school website all information relating to homework. The school prospectus on the website stated that homework was a compulsory and complementary part of the education the school provided.

Parental support was absolutely essential and parents were asked to take an interest in the work set and to check the planner daily. There was a Learning Platform on the website containing records of homework set and provided support materials to help pupils, and parents, achieve success.

The school promoted homework through independent learning as it viewed this as an important contributor to the learning process, the development of learning skills and knowledge, individual responsibility and self-development.

The Curriculum and Teaching committee of the governing body wrote and monitored the Independent Learning Policy which explained that this work could be completed at home, school homework club and in the school library. The policy also described the purpose of independent learning as supporting students in taking greater responsibility, reinforcing, reviewing, consolidating and extending classroom learning, to access resources not available in classroom in order to broaden experiences, it developed student's organisational and personal management skills and it prepared students for classroom work. The policy also stated that independent learning could make parents aware of work carried out in school and therefore strengthens the home school relationship. It also stated, in relation to parents, that it provided the opportunities for those at home to be actively involved in their child's study "for their mutual benefit" and that it would heighten the parents awareness of what the student was covering in class.

Study activities should be well planned and consolidate the classwork, they should be varied and interesting and appropriate to the individual needs of the students, they should be explained to the students, and feedback should be constructive and they should be supported by parents and teachers.

There were homework timetables for each year group with Key Stage Three receiving thirty minutes per subject per week, Key Stage Four up to one hour per subject per week and Key Stage Five three hours per subject per week as a guideline for the amount of homework set but this would depend on exam and assessment circumstances. Year Seven students were given shorter pieces of work to complete than older students in the same key stage, whereas subjects in Key Stage Four and Key Stage Five were influenced by exam board specifications.

The Independent Learning Policy stated that if a student was absent from school through illness they were not expected to complete homework unless there was long term absence in which case personalised support could be offered. However, the school prospectus stated that if a student was absent from school it was their responsibility to ensure that work is collected from the teacher and a new deadline negotiated. Therefore contradicting what was expected.

The policy suggested the type of activities to be undertaken at home could include, research, revision, reading, practicing subject skills, construction, PowerPoint, collecting objects for classroom work and watching a television programme.

There were sanctions in place for non-completion of homework or not completing the task to the best of their ability. Sanctions could include a class detention, contacting home or involving the head of department. The Deputy Head Teacher went in to more detail of how these were organised.

The school welcomed involvement from parents and suggested that if parents had any concerns they contacted the school through the form tutor or subject teacher. Independent learning was monitored and reported on by class teachers and students, parents and teachers had the opportunity to discuss this through mentoring day meetings, information evenings, year group councils, annual surveys and questionnaires.

The policy identified the responsibilities of teachers, parents and students. The responsibilities of teachers included setting and marking homework according to the school policy, making sure that homework was relevant and reinforced classwork, that it was in accordance with the homework timetable and had a set time for completion. Teachers were also asked to make sure

that students had recorded the homework in their planners, to communicate any concerns with other staff and parents and to provide support in school for those who were unable to complete the work at home. The responsibilities of parents were to establish a study area, to give support and time, to monitor the planner, to contact the school with any concerns and to support their child with praise and encouragement. The responsibility of the student was to record the homework set in their planner, to share it with home, complete activities to the best of their ability and to respond positively to feedback given and targets set.

The home-school agreement also encouraged parents and teachers to work together on any issues and better home-school communication was promoted.

It also asked teachers to set, assess and monitor homework, for parents to support their child with their homework and for students to complete all homework to the best of their ability and spend no more than forty five minutes on each piece of work.

School interview with the Deputy Head Teacher

The school had a statement in the Independent Learning Policy stating that homework was set to enrich what was learnt in class. It was designed to be as engaging and as challenging as classwork. It enabled students to work independently and to shape their own learning.

At the time of data collection the school was trialling a computer application programme (app) designed to run on mobile devices and developed by a year nine student. It was being trialled with a year eight group of students before being rolled out to all year groups. The "app" would automatically send an email to parents summarising the homework set.

All students received a planner at the start of the year and they used this to record any homework set. Although homework was not shown on the school website, links to support any homework were shown and these links could be accessed by students and parents. There was a mixture of approaches to setting homework with some departments setting homework centrally and others leaving it to individual teachers. Some departments set a bank of tasks from which teachers could select activities. There was a homework policy and home-school agreement in place and both were available on the school website.

There was a homework timetable in place for all year groups. Students could complete homework independently in the library after school until 5.30pm each night.

Students had equal access to resources and staff support through the homework club in the Learning Support base staffed by Learning Support Assistants and the Mathematics Department offer a homework club after school on a Thursday supported by subject teachers.

There were sanctions in place if homework is not completed and the school used a staged approach to this ranging from another chance, emails to parents, subject detention and whole school detention. This staged approach was organised by the subject teacher, the subject department and the Head of Year. A subject report may also be issued.

The school had tried different types of homework and found that project based homework set over six weeks did not work for their students as they left the work until the end of the six weeks and staff found it difficult to track and monitor progress. The school allowed the students to approach the

homework in the style best suited to their needs and homework was set to both consolidate learning and prepare for the next lesson.

Homework was differentiated by task and by student choice of outcome. Students were expected to have access to the online school Learning Platform which had information sheets, web-links, suggested reading and exemplar material.

The school had considered not setting homework but as the Deputy Head Teacher stated they "needed homework to cover the content and skills within the curriculum". The school had found that "parental support was important and if students were supported by parents and had access to quality learning at home they would conduct wider research and consolidate in-class learning, therefore making a difference to their grades". Homework also helped the students to develop, not only independent learning skills, but also new skills, resilience and contextual knowledge.

5.5 School D

School context

The school was an oversubscribed, larger than average secondary school on the western side of the town. The school was a subject specialist school, a teaching school and had academy status and through the role of Teaching School it supported other schools in the area. The school had been graded one, outstanding, in the previous Ofsted inspection and as two, good, in the latest. The school documents included a home-school agreement, a school policy and a student guide to completing homework. All these documents were available on the school website. An interview took place with the Assistant Head teacher to collect information regarding how the school manages homework

Themes emerging from the data

- a. reliance on ICT to complete homework;
- b. a deliberate attempt by the school to ensure equity between students by enabling access to homework clubs and differentiated by specialist support, to suit their ability and learning style;
- c. sanctions were outlined and shared with parents/families in documents;
- d. differentiated homework was inconsistent;
- e. shared documentation relating to homework:
 - a homework policy indicating timing and balance of homework tasks but that was consistently applied was shared with students and families;
 - a clear understanding of the rationale underpinning the use of homework;
 - a focus on independent learning within the practice of homework and a dependence on students' own motivation for the completion of tasks in the pursuit of self-interest;
 - the purpose of homework was identified in the school homework policy as:
 - helping to make academic progress
 - reinforcing understanding
 - developing independent learning
 - practicing skills
 - involving parents
 - developing research skills
 - working to deadlines
- f. on-going, but inconclusive, discussion about the future of homework.

School documents

The school communicated through the website with all stakeholders and reference to homework was made in the home-school agreement and the

homework policy. It also communicated with the students explaining what was expected of them and how they would be supported. It also shared details of the homework timetable on the website, giving parents details of when homework should be expected.

Student Services provided material online supporting different aspect of the student's school experience. This included a document focusing on homework stating that it was a means of furthering learning, reviewing previously taught content and as preparation for class discussions and activities.

The homework document went into some detail about how students should organise their time and their workload, and it explained key terminology. The document also told the student where and when they could get support in completing homework.

The homework policy also explained why the school considered homework to be important. It stated that homework would help students make rapid progress in learning through reviewing and practicing work carried out in class and to reinforce their understanding. This was also supported by the Assistant Head Teacher who stated that homework was set to “consolidate learning, extend learning, reinforce learning, apply learning to new situations, develop skills, develop independence and support learning”. It would prepare them for examinations, experience working to deadlines and develop independent learning skills. It gave students the opportunity to develop research skills and to use resources not available in school including the support of parents and family members. Students were expected to complete homework as stated in the homework timetable and that this would increase as the students moved year groups. The policy explained that homework may not necessarily be a written activity but may involve researching,

watching a television programme, making a model and would be set by the class teacher based on the needs and ability of the students.

Students recorded homework in a school homework diary or planner and had the opportunity to not only complete homework at home but also in school at lunchtime or after school. The Assistant Head Teacher explained the different sessions. "There is a homework club for each year group, SEN students have a club, Student services run a weekly club in the library and sessions are run for students to complete homework in subjects"

The students also had the opportunity to use the school library. Parents were asked to sign the homework diary each week and to contact the school if they had any concerns about any aspect of this.

There were sanctions in place for failure to complete homework which ranged from a teacher speaking with the student, to an after school detention.

The home-school agreement was signed by the school, families and students. In the agreement the school agreed to set homework regularly and to provide study support to allow students to develop effective study skills and to reinforce material learnt at school and students agreed to complete their homework to the best of their ability and make the use of study support provided by the school. Although all parties were asked to sign the agreement and there was reference to homework in the school and students sections, there was no statement in the agreement requiring parents to support their children in completing any work at home.

School interview with the Assistant Head Teacher

The school organised homework through the class teacher who would set it in accordance with the homework timetable which was based on "as closest a

match as possible to lesson times and balancing the work load", and was often based on previous class work rather than "flipped learning". "Flipped learning" was seen as a much better way of making progress but it was not widely used across all subjects in the school. This timetable also stated how long a piece of homework should take to complete.

There was a homework policy but this was not widely referenced and was due for review and there was a home-school agreement.

There was a homework club at the school each lunch time and organised by the student services team. Some sessions were subject specific, others would focus on target setting, study skills, coursework and examination revision. There was a separate homework club for Special Educational Needs students and this was organised by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), specialist teachers, the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) advisor and teaching assistants who worked with the students in a variety of ways depending on their needs. This ensured equity between students by giving them access to resources and specialist support.

Homework was set to consolidate learning, extend learning, reinforce learning, apply learning to new situations, develop skills, develop independence and support learning.

There were sanctions in place if homework was not completed and these took the form of detentions, extension of time, letters home or telephone calls home. These were reiterated in the school documents.

Homework should be differentiated across all subjects by task and time, but this did not always happen. The type of homework which worked best were short concise tasks which were engaging and promoted learning. The school

documents explained the different types of homework the student may be expected to receive.

Students were expected to have access to computers and internet in order to complete their homework. Homework was seen as motivating and improving grades of some students but "only when progress could be seen and the student was confident about their learning". Homework could also develop and "improve the organisational skills of the student if they believe the teacher will follow up if it is not completed" but this depended on the task set.

The school had discussed whether they should set homework but felt that it was part of the student experience.

5.6 School E

School context

A larger than average secondary school in the north of the town. It was undersubscribed and had specialist status in two areas as well as specialist provision for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) students. The school had been graded three, requires improvement, in the latest Ofsted inspection following a previous inspection when it was also graded as three. The school documents were available on the website and included a home-school agreement, a homework policy and a Parent and Student Guide. An interview took place with the Assistant Principal to discuss the opinion of the school regarding homework.

Themes emerging from the data

a. reliance on ICT:

- to make a public statement of the importance and rationale underpinning the use of homework in lieu of a formal policy statement;

- to enable student access to the homework that had been set, and
 - to involve parents and families in monitoring students' engagement with their homework;
- b. an attempt to ensure equity among students by provision of resources and information differentiated by need and time during the day;
- c. sanctions differentiated by incidence of non-completion of homework;
- d. homework tasks were planned and meaningful and differentiated by task;
- e. shared documentation relating to homework:
- the required home-school agreement was signed by both parents and students;
 - a Parent Student guide communicates expectations with families;
 - the purpose of homework was stated in the homework policy as including:
 - enriching the classroom experiences
 - developing independent skills
 - develop time management and meeting deadlines
 - involving parents
- f. on-going discussion of the future of the use of homework, given that such use had resulted in improvement in student grades in one subject only.

School documents

The school communicated openly with teachers, parents, governors and students on the school website sharing information about the homework policy and the home-school agreement. The school also gave both parents and students key information about all aspects of school life in the Parent Student Guide including details of what was expected in completing homework and what the sanctions were for not doing so. Information and resources were also available from some subject areas online. This guide was also explained by the Assistant Principal.

The school had an outline of their expectations of homework online stating that homework was important as it consolidated learning and created good study habits.

It was explained that students could be given a range of activities to complete outside school including reading, preparation or revision and that year seven students were expected to spend four hours each week on this increasing to ten hours each week for year eleven students.

The staged sanctions were explained in the guide and for failure to complete homework a warning was given and student's name was recorded, repeated failure to complete homework on three occasions would result in a teacher detention and persistent failure to complete homework would incur a detention and contact made with home.

The policy in the parents and student guide explained that each student would receive a planner, a timetable and access to the homework online. Students were asked to record homework in their planners and if they had a problem completing their homework they should speak with their subject teacher. They were also asked to look at the homework when it was given back to them, read and act upon the feedback given.

School staff were also mentioned in the policy with different members of staff having different areas of responsibility including subject teachers, key stage leaders, form tutors and year leaders. The Assistant Principal explained how this work may be differentiated. Teachers were advised that it was essential to set homework with a due date, that it was differentiated and the expected amount of work stated. Resources should be available to those students who did not have access to the internet.

Teachers were also encouraged to set a range of activities including extension to classwork, worksheets, reading, interviews, practical work and directed study. The different faculties at the school should be working collaboratively on homework and have homework as a priority in their termly meetings.

Homework would be monitored and evaluated by the schools' leadership team. Parents were expected to support their children by providing an appropriate place for homework to be completed and to establishing a daily routine for completing it.

They were asked to check and sign the planner each week and comment on any issues and to also access the website. Parents were also encouraged to take a positive interest in their child's work both in school and in any homework set and to encourage their child to read in order to help improve literacy and spelling.

The home-school agreement stated that the document was in place to form a partnership between students, parents and the school. The students, parents and the school all had the opportunity to sign the agreement. In the agreement, students agreed to complete their homework and parents agreed to take an interest in the homework set, any projects or revision to be completed at home and to make sure they were completed. However there was no reference in the home-school agreement to the part the school should take in setting or monitoring homework.

School interview with the Assistant Principal

The school had a statement on their online information site stating that "homework was important as it consolidated learning and helped to create good study habits". The school organised homework electronically and all

parents and students had access to the website used for homework. Staff would put details of the homework on the website and the details of all homework set by all staff in all subjects were available for the last two years.

At the beginning of each year the students received a planner in which they wrote the homework tasks and information about when to submit it.

A homework timetable was created to ensure that homework tasks were evenly spread throughout the week.

There was not a homework policy at the school, however, details of the homework and expectations were shown on the website, the Parent and Student Guide booklet and in the home-school agreement. Year seven students were expected to be set four hours of homework each week rising to ten hours each week for year eleven students. In subjects where homework was not set, for example core physical education or performing arts, students may be expected to attend extracurricular activities at lunchtime or after school.

Equal access for all students to resources and support was offered through the homework club in the library until 4.30pm each evening after school supported by non-teaching staff. Those students in need of additional support could attend a lunchtime homework club organised by the special needs department and supported by teaching staff.

The Assistant Principal stated that "on average 60 per cent of homework was completed" and there were sanctions in place for non-completing, with staff giving students a second chance to submit followed by a detention set by the class teacher.

The homework was differentiated through task and in some subjects students were given a choice how to complete the homework set, for example, the work may be presented as an interview, as a PowerPoint or an essay.

Only the mathematics department had seen an improvement in grades through setting homework. However, the school was working with an outside agency in order to develop learning skills and to increase grades in all areas.

The school had considered alternatives to setting homework and this would be continued to be investigated

5.7 School F

School context

The school was a larger than average, oversubscribed, secondary school on the southeast side of the town in an affluent catchment area. It had specialist subject and academy status. The school had been graded one, outstanding, in a previous Ofsted inspection and was graded as two, good in the latest inspection. An interview took place with the Assistant Principal to gain an insight into the school's opinion on homework.

Themes emerging from the data

a. reliance on ICT:

- to make public the school's view of the importance, and rationale underpinning, homework public therefore ensuring all were aware of the importance placed on homework in the curriculum and in improving the school examination results;
- to enable access to homework tasks for some students;

b. A deliberate approach to ensure:

- equality among students by provision of locations for homework completion differentiated by subjects;

- equity by provision of specialist resources by individual (financial) need;
- c. sanctions were in place for non-completion of homework;
- d. differentiation took place at individual teacher level and not by subject or department;
- e. shared documentation relating to homework:
 - explained the differential conceptualisation of homework:
 - as learning opportunities which did not carry sanctions for non-completion;
 - curriculum reinforcement;
 - preparation for further learning;
 - as a motivator for student learning;
 - as a support for the development of students' skills.
 - the stated purposes of homework were communicated with all in the Parent Handbook and they were to:
 - develop skills, confidence and motivation;
 - consolidate and reinforce understanding;
 - extend school learning;
 - involve parents;
- f. there was no future intention to discontinue setting homework.

School documents

The school communicated with teachers, parents, governors and students online and stated on their website that all information regarding homework was available online.

It shared information on the school website including the homework policy, the home-school agreement and the parent handbook that contained all information regarding homework. It also gave parents access to online curriculum information.

The homework policy stated that students would be given a diary in which they could record any homework set. The school saw homework as giving the student confidence to develop the skills needed to prepare for lessons, revise work, prepare for tests and examinations and to be able to share their learning with their parents. The policy explained that teachers would set regular homework that was suitable for each student and could be completed in the time stated on the homework timetable. Teachers would mark homework and provide feedback on it.

Facilities and resources would be available at school to support those students who were not able to complete homework at home therefore giving all students equal access to provision to support completion of homework. These would also be used by those students who failed to complete homework by the given date. As explained by the Assistant principal these sessions were supported by both teaching and non-teaching staff. The homework timetable showed that students were expected to receive 90 minutes of homework each day in two different subjects.

There was a home-school agreement in place, however there was no reference in the agreement to homework, but students could expect to receive challenging opportunities to learn, parents could expect to see learning opportunities beyond the National Curriculum and were expected to ensure that their child took advantage of all learning opportunities.

There was a Parent Handbook available on the school website in which it explained what the homework expectations were at the school. The handbook explained that the purpose of homework was to prepare students for life-long learning by developing skills, confidence and motivation, to reinforce or consolidate work completed in lessons and revise work for tests,

homework extended learning by encouraging students to use other resources and to involve parents in their child's learning. In order to achieve this, the school would ensure that homework was regularly set in accordance with the homework timetable and it was recorded and monitored through the student diary which was checked by tutors and by parents. Tasks set should be suitable and achievable and within the time set and that facilities and resources were provided so that homework could be completed.

If any homework was not completed then appropriate action should be taken by the teacher responsible for it. Students were expected to complete homework tasks and if necessary take advantage of the support, facilities and resources provided for them. Parents were asked to provide their child with a suitable place to study and to encourage them to complete their homework.

The handbooks also stated that homework was monitored and evaluated by the Vice Principals each term by sampling a selection of student diaries and homework assignments and that an annual survey of parents and students took place. The Associate Principal and Key Stage Three to Five Assistant Principals had the responsibility for overseeing the curriculum and how homework was managed within it. The Learning, Teaching and Welfare committee of the governing body write and monitor the homework policy.

School interview with the Assistant Principal

Homework was set by the subject teacher in accordance with the year group homework timetable. The type of homework would differ between subjects and between teachers and this would include differentiation.

The school was investigating their homework policy and was in the process of updating it and although there was a home-school agreement it made no reference to homework.

Homework was supported by homework clubs organised by subjects, through the enrichment programme and by the Individual Learning Area (ILA). These sessions were supported by subject and non-teaching staff.

Detentions were not given for non-completion of homework but teachers gave learning opportunities which students completed and these were assessed by the subject teacher who then gave feedback. This was further explained in the school documents and was tracked and if homework was not completed then home would be contacted. These tasks were differentiated but this varied between subjects and between teachers. Some subjects used homework to reinforce what had been covered in class where others used it to prepare for future work.

Students were expected in some subjects to have access to computers in order to complete their homework and for those who did not have access at home, resources were available after school in the library or ILA. Some subjects expected students to have specialist equipment including dictionaries, art equipment or mathematical equipment and for those students on free school meals these resources were given to them.

Homework helped improve grades in some subjects particularly in languages and homework, as stated by the Assistant Principal, "improved motivation through rewards and success in having pride in the feedback received" and it was also seen as "supporting the development of organisational and presentation skills".

5.8 Overview

The key themes raised in the analysis of the school documents and interviews and the four key questions will be discussed with reference to the documentary evidence and interviews.

5.8.1 Comparison by theme

When analysing the documents and interviews key themes became apparent and these have been compared across the six schools.

5.8.1.1 Information and Communications Technology

All schools offered information on homework on their websites to support students and parents. Homework was outlined with deadlines and how the homework was to be assessed and parents were asked to look at it and support their children. However, as stated by the Vice Principal in school A "Some teachers are not comfortable with using ICT so the school will support them in developing their skills". In a competitive market the school website was the first contact the school may make with potential parents and it was therefore used to publicly inform and celebrate what they undertake at school. This included the importance of homework in the academic success of the students and in the national agenda of involving parents in the education of the children and in building more effective lines of communication between school and home. However there was assumption that parents and students had access at home to resources that would enable them to access, monitor and complete homework and over reliance on the use of ICT in homework tasks.

5.8.1.2 Equity

The documents made reference to the resources either needed to complete homework at home or those offered by the school. School C Independent Learning Policy stated that homework was set to "broaden learning

experiences by encouraging the use materials and sources of information not available within the classroom", this included using the experience of parents, however were the schools aware if support was available at home? Although schools stated that homework should take into account the resources students had outside school this was not always possible and some schools, for example schools A, C, E and F, deliberately made resources available at different times of the day and offered the support of specialist staff, however many students did not want to or could not use these facilities and resources as they may have been involved in other activities, for example sporting activities or other extracurricular activities or they had to make alternative travel arrangements after school. Although schools were ensuring that there was equity between students and gave all students access to the website, learning resources, subject information and support, there was an assumption that all students had the same access to resources at home.

5.8.1.3 Sanctions

Sanctions for non-completion of homework were shared on the school website and in parent's guide, home-school agreements and homework policy leaving no one in doubt of what was expected and what the consequences were. This reflected the national agenda for the improvement of behaviour in schools and in raising the academic achievement in schools. Sanctions varied between schools and in the case of school F, the Assistant Principal explained that "no detentions are set for homework. Teachers give learning opportunities which pupils complete" sanctions were not imposed and that they dealt with non-completion of homework in different ways. In some cases sanctions were managed at subject level, for example schools A, B and C, whereas others managed them at whole school level. Some schools, for example schools C and E, had graduated sanctions depending on the number of deadlines the student had missed. Schools were encouraging parents to be involved in their children's school work and homework, asked

them to sign the planner to show that they were monitoring homework and sign a home-school agreement. However it was the student who was given the sanction for the non-completion of homework, and the home environment, in many cases, was not taken into consideration.

5.8.1.4 Differentiation

Differentiated homework was inconsistent across schools and within schools. It was not only inconsistent within subject departments but also by individual teachers within those departments. This did not appear to be monitored within subject departments or at a whole school level. Therefore the schools were not giving a consistent message of how they were supporting students with different needs and abilities. If homework was differentiated it was through task or in the case of School B the Deputy Head Teacher explained that "Opportunity for this is via research projects so they can answer a question or research an issue in any medium they like eg song video, story etc".

5.8.1.5 Documentation

All schools issued their students with a planner so that information about school and their work, and in particular homework, could be shared with families, indicating a systematic approach to the recording and sharing of homework.

Although it was not a requirement, all the schools had a policy relating to work to be carried out at home, and had different names for this policy therefore reflecting the educational view of improving student outcomes and the political view of improving school outcomes. It was called either a homework policy, an independent learning policy or a learning and teaching policy, but whatever the name it contained the same elements, why homework was set, what were the expectations, how the work should be

carried out and how home and school could work together. The policy also, for example school B, outlined what the sanctions were for not completing homework.

It is a national requirement that all schools have a home-school agreement and all schools in this study had one therefore reflecting the political agenda of including families in the education of their children. The home-school agreements outlined what was expected by the school, parents and students and each were asked to sign the agreement. Those schools that had a parent guide to the school had a copy of the agreement in that document. Although all the schools had a home-school agreement which all parties signed, it could not be legally enforced and therefore whatever they signed and agreed to could not be imposed.

5.8.1.6 The future of homework

Most of the schools were investigating, in some way, the future of homework at the school. This could be looking at more creative ways or by making homework more efficient. It could also be by comparing the grade outcomes across departments to share good practice. The schools did not indicate how they were evaluating homework and who was involved in this but they needed to take into consideration the views of teachers, parents and students, and in doing so fulfil the national agenda of including parents in the education of their children. However not all schools were doing this, and two of the six were continuing with the setting of homework in the same way, and in the case of one of these schools, School C, the Deputy Head Teacher stated that this was because they could not meet the demands of the curriculum if homework was not set. Therefore this asks the question, was the correct curriculum being offered at the school and if it was why could the teachers not deliver the curriculum?

5.8.2 The four key questions in relation to the findings of school documents and interviews

5.8.2.1 Comparison of the purpose of homework

"What is the purpose of homework?"

The reasons for setting homework appeared to be very similar between the school documents with all the schools explaining why they set homework. The documents stated that homework was set to support students in developing independent learning skills, including organisational and study skills in preparation for future work skills. Homework was set to consolidate and reinforce the work carried out in school and to prepare for future classwork. Schools B, C and D also mentioned that completing homework would help to develop research skills which would be needed in future study. One school (school A) outlined that by completing homework it would be equal to three extra weeks of study and therefore would improve grades. The schools also stated that homework was set as a link between school and home so that parents and families were aware of the work undertaken at school and so that they could support their children in a variety of ways.

5.8.2.2 Comparison of the type of homework

"What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?"

The type of homework set was detailed in the school policy and this was different between the schools. Schools would suggest a variety of homework which could involve writing, reading, research or revising and in two schools (schools C and D) it was suggested that students may be asked to watch a television programme. Schools suggested that homework tasks should be achievable, suitable for the subject, age range and ability of the students and should take into account the resources and support required to complete the work. However it could be seen by the evidence in the documentation and interviews that this was not happening consistently across all schools.

5.8.2.3 Comparison of the home environment

"Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?"

Parental support was expected by all schools to some extent, however if a piece of homework was to be assessed was the school assessing the student's work or the family's work? Some schools (schools A and F) actually stated that the work was expected to be completed jointly between parents and students. If a piece of work was not completed who was then given the sanction, the student or the parent? All schools asked parents to oversee and monitor that homework was being completed and to make a space and resources available at home. As well as signing the home-school agreement at the start of each year parents were also asked to sign the homework or school planner each week to show that they were aware of any homework set. Schools encouraged the support of parents, however, they did not always involve them in the decision making regarding homework.

5.8.2.4 Comparison of evidence against Hallam's four factors affecting homework

"What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?"

These have been identified by Hallam (2004) as the four factors affecting homework.

Table 5.1 Comparison of evidence against Hallam's four factors affecting homework

Factor	Political	Economic	Social	Educational
School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-school agreement • Home learning policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develops independent skills</i> • <i>Develops learning skills</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Website • <i>survey monkey and moodle to support their homework. and share with parents</i> • <i>Student planner</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develops independent skills</i> • <i>Develops learning skills</i> • <i>Increase in grades</i> • <i>Homework club</i>
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-school agreement • Learning and teaching policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promotes independent learning</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Website • <i>Student planner</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for parents Booklet • <i>Improves grades if relevant work is set</i> • <i>Promotes independent learning</i> • <i>Based on classwork</i> • <i>Homework club</i>
School C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-school agreement • Independent learning policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enriches what is learnt in class</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Website • Prospectus • <i>Parental support at home to offer quality learning at home</i> • <i>Student planner</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prepares for future work</i> • <i>Develops independence, resilience and contextual knowledge</i> • <i>Cover the curriculum</i> • <i>Consolidates classwork</i> • <i>Homework club</i>
School D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-school agreement • Homework policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improves organisational skills</i> • <i>Develops independence</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Website • <i>Student planner</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on homework • <i>Improves grades for engaged students</i> • <i>Flipped learning</i> • <i>Consolidates, reinforces, extends learning</i> • <i>Homework club</i>
School E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-school agreement • Homework policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develops independent skills</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Website • Parents and students guide • <i>Homework website for parents and students to access</i> • <i>Student planner</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and students guide • <i>consolidates learning and create good study habits</i> • <i>Homework club</i>
School F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-school agreement • Homework policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develops independent learning</i> • <i>Develops organisational and presentation skills</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Website • Parents handbook • <i>Build confidence</i> • <i>Students share their work with parents</i> • <i>Student planner</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents handbook • <i>Develops organisational and presentation skills</i> • <i>Homework club</i>

Bold - Documents

Italic - Interviews

Table 5.2 Summary of the comparison of evidence against Hallam's four factors affecting homework

Factor	Summary across all schools
Political	School policy Home-school agreement
Economic	Develops independent learning Develops organisational and presentation skills Develops independence Enriches what is learnt in class Develops learning skills
Social	School Website: To share information To communicate with families To monitor progress To share progress To access work Student planner Parents handbook Build confidence Parents can support their children
Educational	Information booklet Develops : organisational skills presentation skills learning skills Independent learning independence, resilience contextual knowledge study skills Homework club Consolidates learning Reinforces learning Reinforces classwork Extends learning Increase grades Flipped learning Prepares for future work Cover the curriculum

Political factor

All schools adhered to the political requirements of having a home-school agreement in place. However, although all those involved were asked to sign this document it cannot be legally enforced and whatever they were signing and agreeing to cannot be imposed and this included the schools, parents and students. So although the schools were fulfilling the government requirements there was no legal requirement for any party to adhere to the agreement. This, once again, shows that although a government was attempting to have some effect on the homework agenda it was not succeeding on imposing it. Schools do not have to have a homework or homework related policy, however, each school did make reference to homework in either a standalone policy or in another curriculum related policy. This policy outlined what was expected and once again it could only be an expectation and not an enforced requirement, as governments have only set guidelines towards implementation. All documents were available on the school websites for all parties and the public to access.

Economic Factor

All schools were committed to supporting their students in not only achieving while at school but in supporting them in developing life skills for future study and the work place. This was confirmed by the school documents and in the interviews with the senior members of staff. Schools stated that homework was set to support in the development of these skills and in particular becoming independent and an independent learner and in future employment. If a student took ownership of their own work then they were more likely to realise their full potential and therefore achieve higher grades. The nationally recognised examination results achieved by pupils were reported on by schools and a school was judged on this against other schools, not only locally, but also regionally and nationally. This is also the public perception of the school and comparisons would be made between

schools by the current parents and future parents and by future employers and it is therefore important for a school to be perceived in a positive way by all.

Social factor

It was important for schools to share information, not only with the main stakeholders of teachers, governors, families and students, but also with the wider public audience, and the school website was the platform the schools used for publicising information. It can be seen above that some schools are oversubscribed (schools B, C, D and F) or undersubscribed (schools A and E) and it is important that they attract the target number of pupils for them to be able to offer a balanced and varied curriculum to suit the needs and abilities of all students. Schools can attract students and their families by sharing information about their school ethos, policies, successes and profile. It can share with the wider community the corporate identity of the school. It can share information about the curriculum and what it can offer students and provide details of homework, projects and assignments and provide access to key documents. Those key documents include the already described relevant school policy referencing homework and the home-school agreement and also any guides the school wants parents and the wider public to have access to.

Educational factor

The schools supported the educational aspect of homework in a number of ways. All schools offered a homework club and these varied in the times of day and staffing and resources it make available to the students. Most of the schools assisted parents in supporting their children by giving them access to a guide online which outlined the expectations of homework and detailed how families could support this. Schools explained the educational benefits of completing homework in the documents including developing independent

and organisational skills, extending and reinforcing the curriculum, and as with school C, to cover the required curriculum and in so doing increases grades. However there was only an educational value to homework if the student understood the work in class and it was relevant to what they were studying in class.

5.9 Summary

This chapter reviewed the school documents relating to homework, school policy and the home-school agreement and the interviews conducted with members of the senior leadership at the school. All schools fulfilled their legal obligation and each school presented the information in different ways. Some schools used technology and their school website to inform students and families. The documents and how the information is communicated will work differently at each school and they must take into account the requirements of all stakeholders who will need to access the information and this included teachers, governors, students and parents so the information must be presented for all to understand and to be able to use effectively. Referring to the main questions of this study it can be found through review of the school documents and interviews that, firstly, the purpose of homework is stated in the school documents and shared publicly on the school websites. Secondly, parental involvement is a key factor of all the schools involved in the study and each school outlined the role parents could make in supporting their children's education. Thirdly, schools identify through their website and information documents, the type of homework they expected the students to undertake and in some cases offer the students the opportunity to choose how they would like to complete any tasks. Finally, Hallam's four factors affecting homework have been identified in these documents. The political factor, has been addressed through the use of the home-school agreement and any policies written to support homework. The economic factor, has focussed on the development of transferable skills of the learner. The social

factor, has been addressed by looking at how schools work with parents in supporting their children and the work they were undertaking. The educational factor, has centred on the information it shares about the curriculum, the reason for setting homework and the educational support through homework clubs.

Chapter 6 FINDINGS - QUESTIONNAIRES

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the findings from the questionnaires. Where differences between groups of respondents or schools reached a level of significance of $p \leq 0.05$ using a Chi-square statistical test these differences have been highlighted. In addition where this is the case the figures illustrating these differences have been included in the text and other figures can be found in the appendix.

In this chapter there are ninety eight tables and ninety two figures. A complete set of tables and figures can be found in the appendix. Tables and figures have been selected for inclusion in the main text if they illustrate significant differences between respondents.

For the purpose of clarity it is useful to reiterate the achievement levels of schools

Table 4.1: Key Stage 4 Results. DfE 2015a

School	per cent achieving 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent)
England - state funded schools only	65.50 per cent
Local Authority - state funded schools only	60 per cent
School A	50 per cent
School B	75 per cent
School C	60 per cent
School D	75 per cent
School E	50 per cent
School F	70 per cent

6.2 Respondents

The overall response rate of the students was 82 per cent; for teachers it was 8 per cent of the total workforce at the schools; of the governors it was 20 per cent of the total number of governors; of families it was between 20 per cent and 84 per cent with an average school family response rate of 42 per cent (see table 6.1).

Table 6.2: Number of respondents DfE 2015d

	School	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Teachers	Actual	2	9	7	12	11	11	52
	Possible	100	140	130	110	130	110	720
	%	2	6	5	11	8	10	7
Families	Actual	21	12	5	18	7	6	69
	Possible	25	30	25	30	25	30	165
	%	84	40	20	60	28	20	42
Students	Actual	19	28	5	28	25	30	135
	Possible	25	30	25	30	25	30	165
	%	76	93	20	93	100	100	82
Governors	Actual	0	7	0	5	3	1	16
	Possible	11	16	11	15	14	14	81
	%	0	44	0	33	21	7	20

6.2 1 Students' backgrounds

The participant group comprised of 53 per cent boys and 47 per cent girls, which was almost in line with the data for the town of 50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls. The largest ethnic group was "White British" (71 per cent). No student refused to give any information. The DfE 2015a data showed that the schools in the urban area ranged from approximately 5 per cent to approximately 20 per cent of students having English as an additional language, however the respondents at all schools showed that 97 per cent had English as their first language and only 3 per cent had another language.

6.2.2 Family backgrounds

64 per cent of respondents for families were female and 36 per cent were male. 58 per cent of families were "White British", with the next largest group "Black or Black British African" (10 per cent). The response rate for families was 42 per cent and of these 95 per cent stated that English was their first language.

6.2.3 Teachers' backgrounds

The teaching workforce at each school was predominantly female (72 per cent), which was slightly higher than the total workforce across secondary schools in England in 2015 at 62 per cent female (DfE, 2015d). 75 per cent of teachers reported that they were "White British. All except one teacher respondent stated that they were qualified teachers. However, in relation to the teaching force as a whole in these schools, only one school in this study had 100 per cent qualified workforce teaching in the school. The other schools ranged between 88 per cent and 98 per cent qualified teachers. 76 per cent of respondents had a postgraduate qualification compared with the DfE (2015d) data which showed that 95.5 per cent of teachers held qualifications at degree level or higher. Of the respondents, 51 per cent had been teaching less than ten years, 39 per cent between eleven and twenty years, 4 per cent between twenty and thirty years and 6 per cent over thirty years. The average number of years service for all respondents was 10.5 years with a range between one year and thirty-five years.

6.2.4 Governors' backgrounds

Unlike families and teachers the governor respondents were made up of more male governors, 62 per cent, which reflected the actual proportion of male governors in these schools. Of the sixteen governors, 81 per cent were "White British", seven (44 per cent) were Parent Governors, five (44 per cent) were Co-opted Governors and the other categories of Associate, Local

Authority, Partnership and Staff each had one (6 per cent) governor responding.

6.3 Setting homework

6.3.1 Why is homework set?

The most common response amongst those that were suggested to the groups (between 22 per cent and 28 per cent of respondents in all groups) was to "reinforce what the students had done in class".

There was an average 21 per cent of all respondents who stated that homework was set to "help students to work independently" which was a skill that all schools had reported they would like students to develop for not only working in school but in future employment and study (see figure 6.1 and table 6.2).

More families (17 per cent) and students (18 per cent) responded that homework was set "to finish classwork" than teachers (9 per cent) and governors (6 per cent). The difference between students and families and teachers, and governors to the "To finish classwork" response was significant at $p \leq 0.05$. Even so, it was only about one fifth of students and families who said this.

There was agreement between all groups (between 14 per cent and 17 per cent) in that homework was set to "help students learn more".

Only 1 per cent of teachers reported setting homework as a punishment but 8 per cent of students and 3 per cent of families reported homework as a punishment. The families and the teacher who responded that homework was set as a punishment were all from the same school, the lowest achieving school (school A), where the teacher respondent was an unqualified teacher.

Summary

- The most common reason with the highest level of agreement between the respondent groups was homework was set to "reinforce what the students had done in class".
- Significantly more students and families stated that homework was set to "finish classwork" compared with teachers and governors.
- Although some students from all schools stated that homework was given as punishment, only one teacher stated this and this teacher was unqualified.

6.3.2 Should homework be set?

The options given to the respondents were "yes", "no" or "don't know". Only one group gave an overall 100 per cent answer of "yes" and that was the governor respondents. Most teachers said it should be set (90 per cent). Most of the families (58 per cent) and students (62 per cent) responded that it should not be set. More students were not in favour of it compared with families. (see figure 6.2 and table 6.3 in appendix 28).

When comparing schools, the data showed that proportionately more families, teachers and governors in the higher achieving schools (schools B, D and F), in the more affluent catchments areas of the town, reported that homework should be set. In the highest achieving schools (school B, D and F) 100 per cent of teachers, governors and the majority of families thought homework should be set. (see figure 6.3 and table 6.4 below)

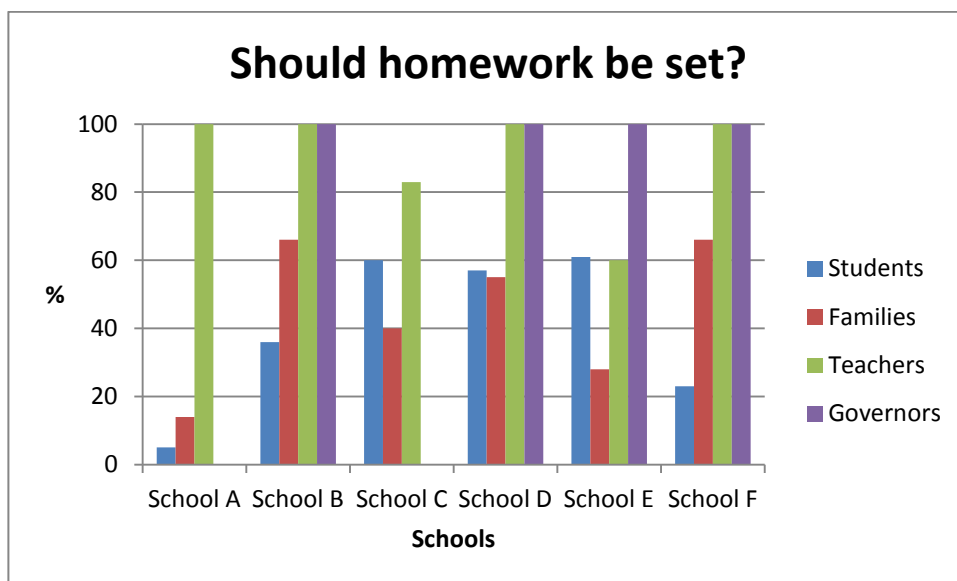


Figure 6.3: Frequency chart - Should homework be set?

Table 6.4: Frequency chart - Should homework be set?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	5	3	14	2	100	n/a	n/a
School B	15	31	8	66	9	100	7	100
School C	3	60	2	40	5	83	n/a	n/a
School D	16	57	10	55	11	100	5	100
School E	14	61	2	28	6	60	3	100
School F	7	23	4	66	10	100	1	100

Summary

- More teachers and governors were in agreement that homework should be set compared with students and families
- Proportionately more families, teachers and governors at the higher achieving schools stated that homework should be set compared with the lower achieving schools.
- Significantly more families and students were not in favour of setting homework.

6.3.3 Does homework improve grades?

Students were split almost evenly between those who thought it improved grades (51 per cent) and those who did not (49 per cent). This was in contrast to the majority answering that homework should not be set. Likewise, although the majority of families stated that homework should not be set, 63 per cent of them thought that homework improved grades. Teachers and governors were much more likely to say ‘yes’ than families and students that homework improved grades. This result was significant at $p \leq 0.05$. Even though just over half of the students and families thought it improved grades most (over 80 per cent) thought it should not be set. 94 per cent of the governors thought homework improved grades with the rest responding that they did not know.

Only teachers were asked how they knew that it was homework that improved grades as they would have access to student grades and achievement data. They responded that the proof was “improved grades” (36 per cent) followed by “improved independent work” 19 per cent and then equally 15 per cent for “improved classwork”, “improved memory” and “improved study skills” (see figure 6.4 and table 6.5 in appendix 28).

When school responses were compared, the data showed that, as with the question on “Should homework be set?”, families, teachers and governors in the more high achieving schools (schools B, D and F), and in the faith school (school C) reported that homework did improve grades. Again, students and families at one of the lowest achieving schools (school A) gave the lowest scores for this question indicating that very few thought homework improved grades. The majority of students (75 per cent average across the two schools) at two of the three high achieving schools (schools B and D) stated that homework did improve grades. The majority of students at the third

highest achieving school (School F) gave the lowest percentage positive response of 24 per cent compared with the average of 51 per cent (see figure 6.5 and table 6.6 below).

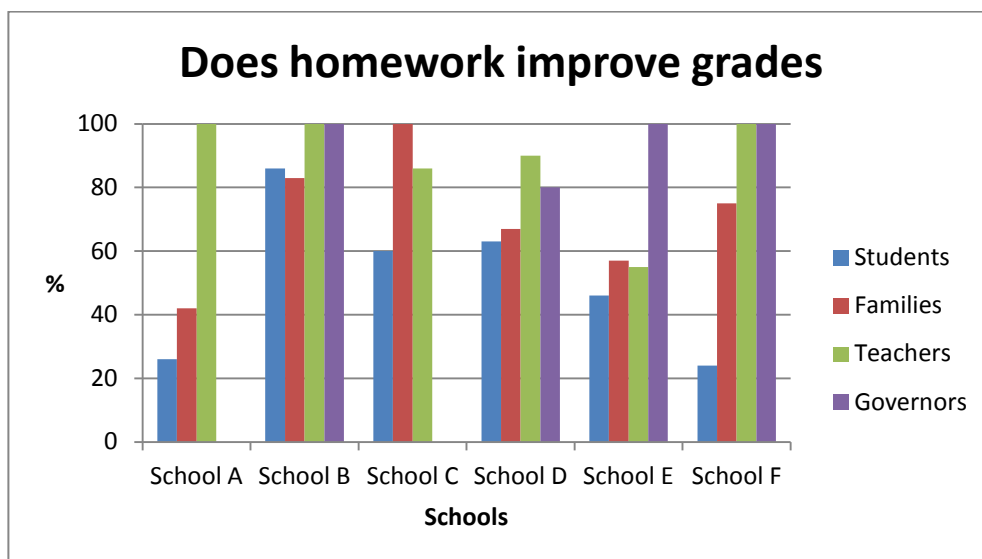


Figure 6.5: Frequency chart - Does homework improve grades?

Table 6.6: Frequency chart - Does homework improve grades?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	5	26	8	42	1	100	n/a	n/a
School B	24	86	10	83	9	100	7	100
School C	3	60	5	100	6	86	n/a	n/a
School D	17	63	12	67	9	90	4	80
School E	11	46	4	57	6	55	3	100
School F	7	24	3	75	11	100	1	100

Summary

- Significantly more teachers and governors were in agreement that homework did improve grades compared with students and families.
- More families, teachers and governors at the higher achieving schools reported that homework improved grades compared with the lower achieving schools.

6.3.4 Is homework a valuable aid to learning?

The majority of all groups responded that they thought homework was a valuable aid to learning with teachers (83 per cent) and governors (94 per cent) giving the more positive responses compared with families (66 per cent) and students (63 per cent). Although students (37 per cent) and families (21 per cent) did not think that homework should be set, the majority (65 per cent average) thought that it was a valuable aid to learning. The difference between teachers and governors and students and families was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ (see figure 6.7 and table 6.8 in appendix 28).

When comparing responses across schools it could be seen that it was proportionately more families, teachers and governors at the three higher achieving schools (school B, D and F) giving the positive response that homework was a valuable aid to learning compared with the two lower achieving schools (school E and A). Students (38 per cent) and families (35 per cent) from the lowest achieving school (school A) did not see homework as a valuable aid to learning (see figure 6.8 and table 6.9 below).

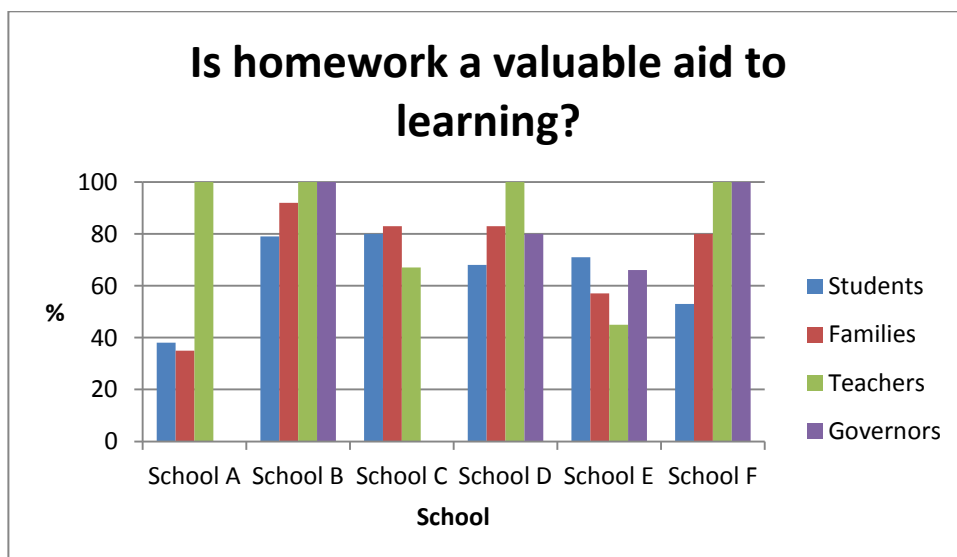


Figure 6.8: Frequency chart - Is homework a valuable aid to learning?

Table 6.9: Frequency chart - Is homework a valuable aid to learning?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	6	38	7	35	1	100	n/a	n/a
School B	22	79	11	92	8	100	7	100
School C	4	80	5	83	4	67	n/a	n/a
School D	19	68	15	83	9	100	5	80
School E	17	71	4	57	5	45	2	66
School F	16	53	4	80	11	100	1	100

Summary

- Proportionately more teachers and governors were in agreement that homework was a valuable aid to learning compared with students and families, although the majority of students and families still reported it as valuable.
- The higher achieving schools reported homework as a more valuable aid to learning compared with the lower achieving schools.

6.3.5 Does completing homework help students understand classwork?

The majority of all teachers (88 per cent) students (58 per cent) and families (54 per cent) thought that completing homework helped students to understand classwork. However, the difference in positive responses between teachers on the one hand and students and families on the other was highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$) (see figure 6.9 and table 6.10 in appendix 28).

Summary

- The majority of teachers thought completing homework helped students to understand classwork.

When comparing the positive responses to the questions “Should homework be set?”, “Does homework improve grades?”, “Is homework a valuable aid to

learning?” and “Does completing homework help you to understand classwork” more teachers and governors thought, overall, that there were benefits to setting homework and that it should be set, compared with the responses from families and students. Although the majority of students did not think homework should be set, the majority thought it was a valuable aid to learning and helped them to understand classwork. Although the majority of families did not think it should be set they thought that it improved grades and was of value (see table 6.11 below).

Table 6.11: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to whether homework should be set

	Students	Families	Teachers	Governors
Should homework be set?	38%	42%	90%	100%
Does homework improve grades?	51%	63%	85%	94%
Is homework a valuable aid to learning?	63%	66%	83%	94%
Does completing homework help to understand classwork?	58%	54%	88%	n/a

6.3.6 How is homework useful to year 10 students?

Only teachers were asked this question. 16 per cent of them did not respond. This matched the number of responses that stated that homework was not valuable and did not improve grades. 63 per cent of teachers thought homework was useful in that it "reinforced what was done in class". The next reasons given were "helps students work independently" (15 per cent) and "helps students learn more" (11 per cent). Only 2 per cent of teachers responded "to finish off classwork", 2 per cent responded "preparation for classwork" and 1 per cent responded "helps you cover all the work". No teachers stated that punishment as homework was useful (see figure 6.10 in appendix 28 and figure 6.11 and tables 6.12 and 6.13 below).

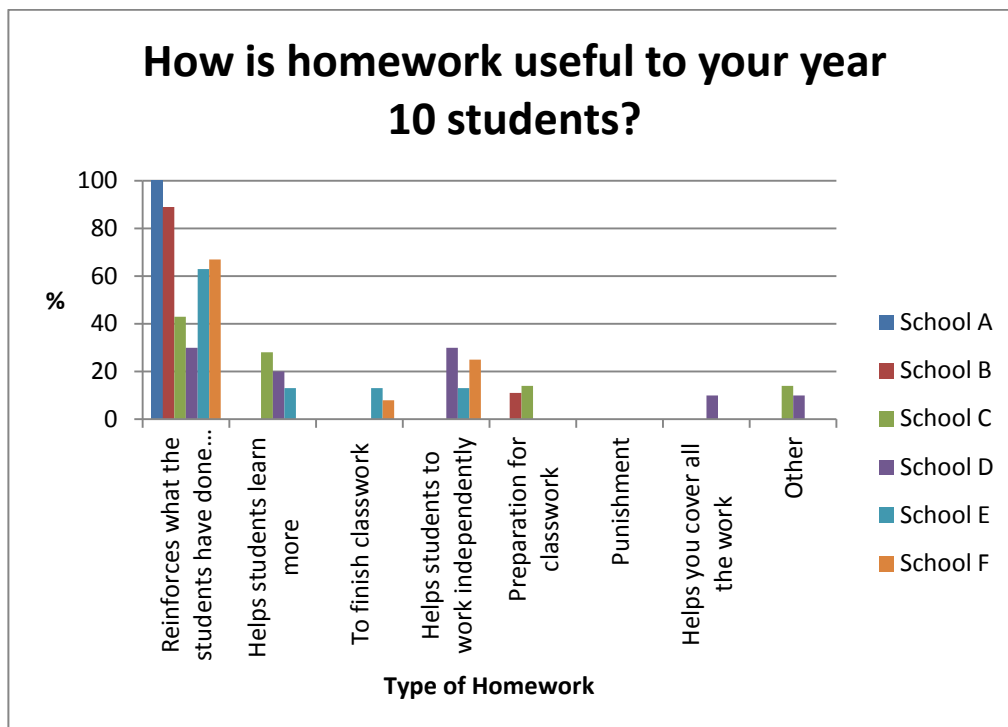


Figure 6.11 Frequency chart - How is homework useful to your year 10 students?

Table 6.13: Frequency chart - How is homework useful to your year 10 students?

	School A		School B		School C		School D		School E		School F	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Reinforces what the students have done in class	2	100	8	89	3	43	3	30	5	63	8	67
Helps students learn more	0	0	0	0	2	28	2	20	1	13	0	0
To finish classwork	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	1	8
Helps students to work independently	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	30	1	13	3	25
Preparation for classwork	0	0	1	11	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Punishment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Helps you cover all the work	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	1	14	1	10	0	0	0	0

Summary

- The majority of teachers thought that homework reinforced what the students had done in class.
- There was no difference between five of the schools stating that homework either reinforced what was done in class or helped the students to learn more.

6.3.7 What sort of homework is set?

The students were asked to state for each subject what sort of homework was set. "Finishing off classwork" was given by 28 per cent of students, "revision" (23 percent) and "preparation for classwork" (22 per cent).

Although "preparation for classwork" was a reason given by about one quarter of students, only 4 per cent of teachers stated that it was a useful type of homework.

"Finishing off classwork" received either the highest or second to highest responses in all subjects except drama, with English and humanities receiving the highest number of responses.

"Revision" ranked highly with non practical subjects, especially mathematics and languages.

About a quarter of respondents reported that homework was set as "preparation for classwork" in all subjects, and this was in keeping with what was expected based on school policy and guidelines for setting homework.

Students stated that they were set "Coursework" (18 per cent) and "projects" (8 per cent) but this depended on the subject studied for example, design, art and drama.

The only subject setting "worksheets" was mathematics and this was only by three students at two different schools. Worksheets could be seen as reinforcing what was completed in class (see figures 6.12, 6.13 and tables 6.14, 6.15 in appendix 28).

Summary

- The majority of students stated that "Finishing off classwork", "revision" and "preparation for classwork" were the most common types of homework given. There is very little relationship between students' reports of what was set and teachers' views of how homework was useful in the previous question.

6.3.8 What is the most effective homework?

All groups thought that "revision" was the most effective type of homework with teachers 39 per cent, students 36 per cent and governors 36 per cent. According to the three groups "coursework" was the second most effective type of homework. All three groups rated "preparation for classwork" (between 13 per cent and 19 per cent) as an effective type of homework. "Projects" was rated very similarly by all groups reflecting school policy as expressed in chapter five. All three groups rated "finishing off classwork" as the least effective type of homework and yet, as discussed above this was the main type of homework set in most subjects (see figure 6.14 and table 6.15 in appendix 28).

Summary

- All three groups, students, teachers and governors agreed that "revision" was the most effective type of homework. This conflicts with views of the most common type of homework set, "finishes off classwork".

6.4 The Home Environment

6.4.1 Family activities

Both students and families reported issues relating to the time taken up with homework encroaching on family activities. 75 per cent of students felt that homework did affect family activities whereas only 55 per cent of families agreed with this. Families were also asked how homework affected family activities, and 75 per cent of those who responded stated that there was no time for family activities, the students could not take part in family events, and weekends and evenings were governed by homework. Families (10 per cent) were also concerned that the students did not interact with the family and there was less conversation as they were in their bedroom completing the work often late into the evening and at weekends. The negative effects on family life were exacerbated by the frequent clash of deadlines when different subjects did not coordinate these. 5 per cent of those families who responded also remarked that students were expected to use the computer and internet for their work and in some homes there was only one computer between all members of the family, including other children wanting to complete homework (see figure 6.15 and table 6.16 in appendix 28).

When comparing the responses across schools to the question it could be seen that the majority of students in all schools thought that homework affected family activities. The higher results from students were from the three higher achieving schools (schools B, D and F). Families from all but one school thought that homework affected family activities and that was from one of the lower achieving schools (school E) (see figure 6.16 and table 6.18 below).

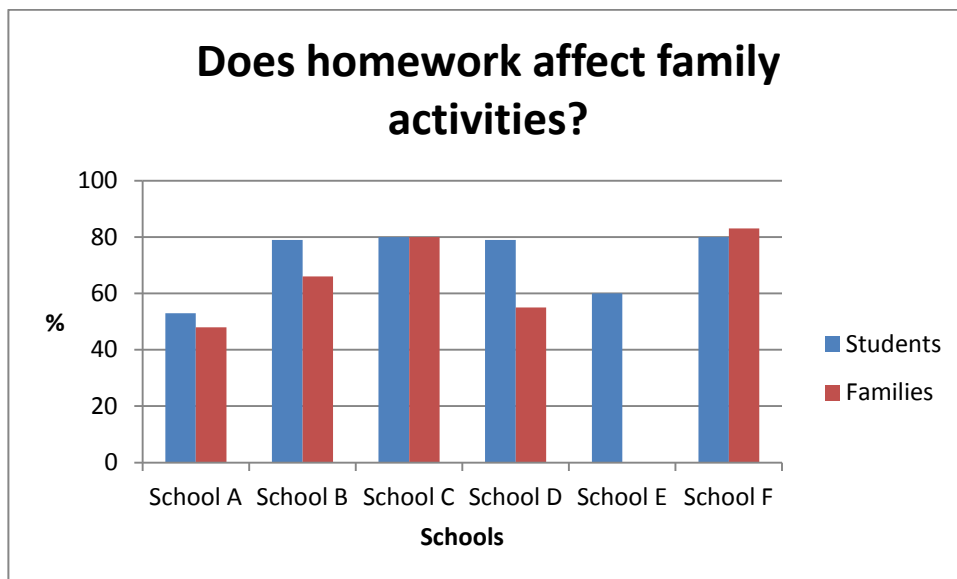


Figure 6.16: Frequency chart - Does homework affect family activities?

Table 6.18 Frequency chart - Does homework affect family activities?

	Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%
School A	10	53	10	48
School B	22	79	8	66
School C	4	80	4	80
School D	22	79	10	55
School E	15	60	0	0
School F	24	80	5	83

Summary

- More students thought that homework did affect family activities compared with their families.
- Proportionally more students from the higher achieving schools thought that homework did affect family activities compared with the students from the lower achieving schools.

6.4.2 Where and when is homework completed?

Only families and students were asked where homework was completed. Both families (64 per cent) and students (61 per cent) stated that the majority of homework was completed at home.

12 per cent of students stated that they completed their homework in class.

8 per cent of students worked at a friend's house.

Only 5 per cent of students attended homework club to complete homework at school and the responses showed that most of these were from male students. Homework clubs took place either at lunch time or after school when students may have been involved in extracurricular activities or needed school transport to take them home therefore making attending homework clubs difficult. They could also have been under peer pressure not to attend.

Those who completed their homework at home were asked where at home they worked. The majority of students (54 per cent) and almost half the families (49 per cent) stated that homework was completed in the bedroom. The highest number of students working in their bedrooms came from the highest achieving schools (schools B, D and F). 46 per cent of students and 51 per cent of families responded that work was completed in communal areas of the house including the dining room, living room, kitchen or study. School agreements required families to make space available for students to complete homework at home; however it may not be possible for students to be on their own due to space available. The differences in use of private and communal space for homework at home, between the higher and lower achieving schools, was not significant.

73 per cent of students stated that the majority of homework was completed between 3pm and 9pm with 12 per cent working later than 9pm. 3 per cent of students completed their homework before leaving for school in the morning (see figures 6.17, 6.19, 6.21 and tables 6.19, 6.21, 6.23 in appendix 28 and in figures 6.18 and 6.20 and tables 6.20 and 6.22 below).

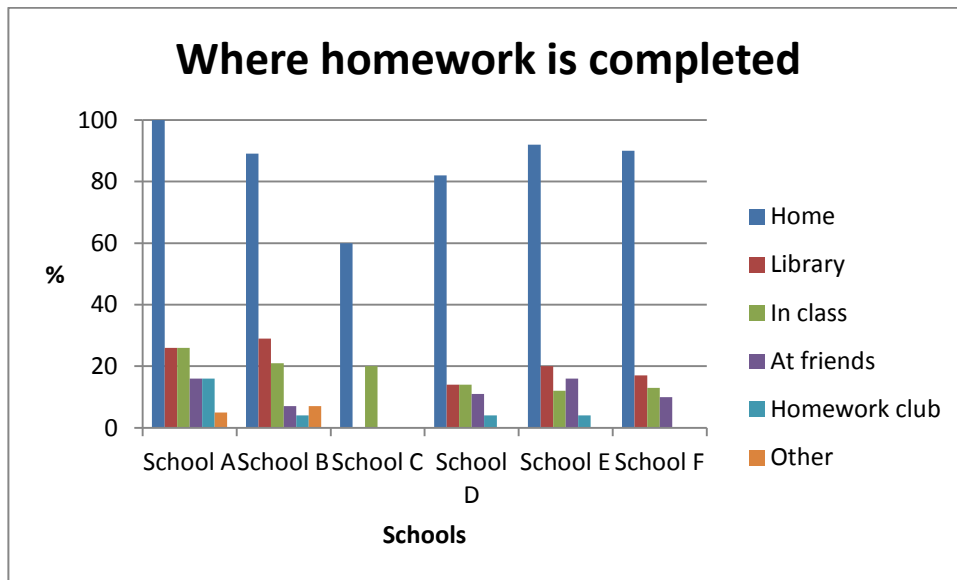


Figure 6.18: Frequency chart - Where is homework completed? Student responses

Table 6.20: Frequency chart - Where is homework completed? Student responses

	Home		Library		In class		At friends		Home work Club		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	19	100	5	26	5	26	3	16	3	16	1	5
School B	25	89	8	29	6	21	2	7	1	4	2	7
School C	3	60	0	0	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
School D	23	82	4	14	4	14	3	11	1	4	0	0
School E	23	92	5	20	3	12	4	16	1	4	0	0
School F	27	90	5	17	4	13	3	10	0	0	0	0

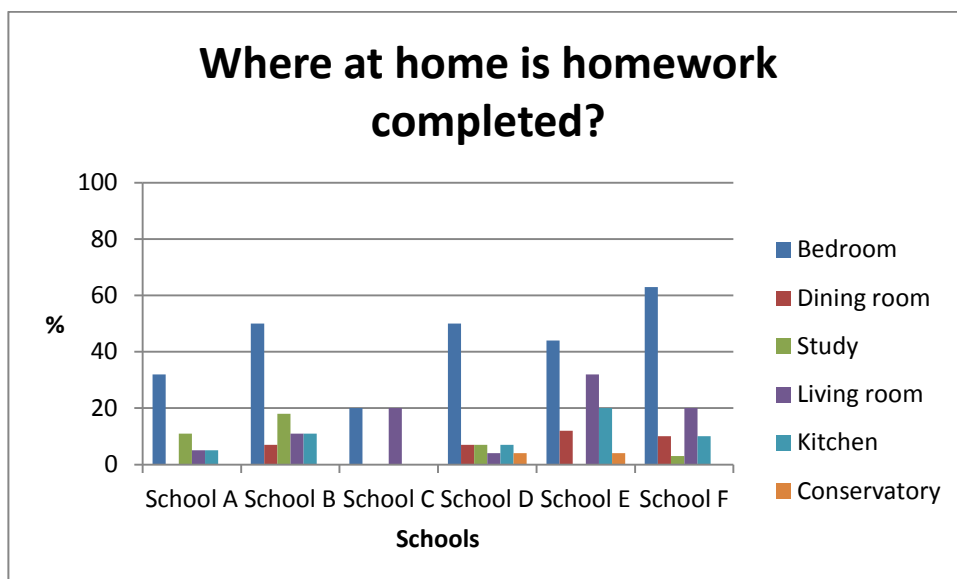


Figure 6.20: Frequency chart - Where at home is homework completed?
Student responses

Table 6.22: Frequency chart - Where at home is homework completed?
Student responses

		School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Bedroom	n	6	14	1	14	11	19
	%	32	50	20	50	44	63
Dining room	n	0	2	0	2	3	3
	%	0	7	0	7	12	10
Study	n	2	5	0	2	0	1
	%	11	18	0	7	0	3
Living room	n	1	3	1	1	8	6
	%	5	11	20	4	32	20
Kitchen	n	1	3	0	2	5	3
	%	5	11	0	7	20	10
Conservatory	n	0	0	0	1	1	0
	%	0	0	0	4	4	0

Summary

- The majority of families and students stated that homework was completed at home.
- Most students completed their homework in their bedroom.
- The majority of homework was completed between 3pm and 9pm.
- There was no significant difference between schools with the majority of students completing homework at home.
- Neither was there a difference between schools with the majority of students completing their homework in their bedroom or living room.

6.4.3 Does homework cause the students stress?

All three groups were in agreement that homework caused the students stress, however the proportion in each group varied considerably, with 57 per cent of teachers, 84 per cent of students and 65 per cent of families stating that homework caused stress. Comparing the responses of students and families this result was significant at $p \leq 0.01$. There was no significant difference between staff and families in relation to homework causing stress. Teachers were then asked which students they felt were stressed by homework and they responded equally that it was “Boys” (23 per cent) and “Girls” (20 per cent). This was followed by “Special Education Needs” students (17 per cent), those who had “English as an additional language” (11 per cent) and “Pupil Premium” students (10 per cent). Teachers also felt that “Gifted and Talented” (9 per cent) students, “High Mobility” (6 per cent) students and “New Arrivals” (4 per cent) also felt stressed to some extent by having to complete homework (see figures 6.22, 6.24 and tables 6.24, 6.26 in appendix 28).

Comparing the results across the schools, students from the three highest achieving schools (schools B, D and F) showed the highest number of positive responses that homework caused stress with a positive response

rate of between 93 per cent and 87 per cent compared with the average of 80 per cent in all the schools. The two highest numbers of positive responses from teachers came from two of the highest achieving schools (schools B and F), 80 per cent and 67 per cent compared with the average of 56 per cent (see figure 6.23 and table 6.25 below).

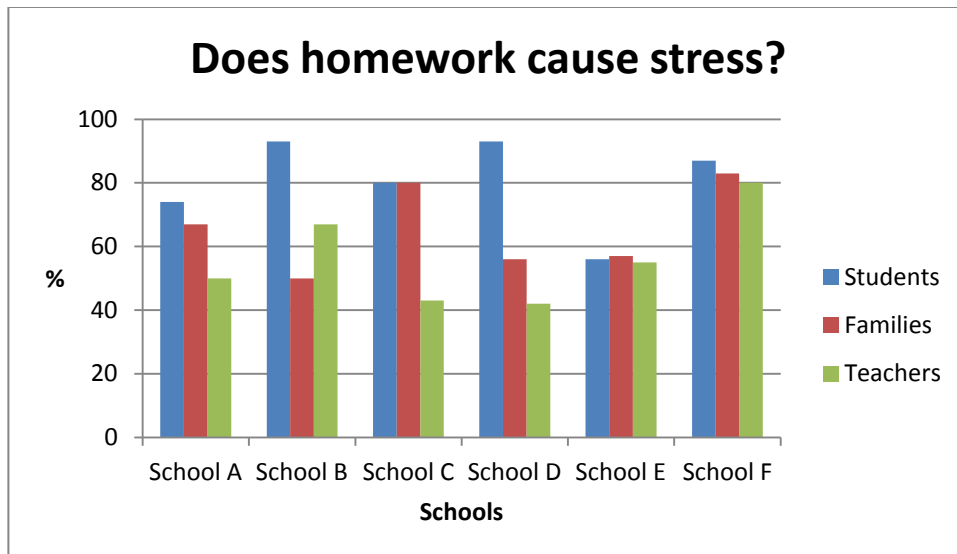


Figure 6.23: Frequency chart - Does homework cause stress?

Table 6.25: Frequency chart - Does homework cause stress?

	Students		Families		Teachers	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	15	74	14	67	1	50
School B	26	93	6	50	6	67
School C	4	80	4	80	3	43
School D	26	93	10	56	5	42
School E	14	56	4	57	6	55
School F	26	87	5	83	8	80

Summary

- The majority of students and families stated that homework did cause stress. There was only a slight majority of teachers stating this. Teachers

stated that there was very little difference between boys and girls showing signs of homework causing stress.

- Proportionately more students at the higher achieving schools and more teachers at two of the higher achieving schools stated that it caused stress compared with the four other schools.

6.4.4 Allowances made in setting homework

Only teachers were asked if they were aware which students had difficulty completing homework and 80 per cent responded that they would know. Teachers were also asked which of the students would have difficulty completing homework at home. The responses were slightly different to those students who teachers thought were stressed by homework. 24 per cent of teachers thought that students with “Special Education Needs” had more difficulty completing homework than other categories of students; this was closely followed by “Boys” (22 per cent), students who had “English as an additional language” (18 per cent) and “Pupil Premium students” (14 per cent). “Girls” had been rated highly by teachers as a group who were stressed by homework; however, teachers felt that they did not have too much difficulty completing homework at home (9 per cent). Once again “New Arrivals” (6 per cent), “Gifted and Talented” (4 per cent) students, and “High Mobility” (3 per cent) students were seen as groups who would not have difficulty completing their homework.

Teachers were then asked if they made allowances for those students who were having difficulty and 65 per cent of them did make allowances. However, when governors were asked if teachers should take home circumstances into account when setting homework, 38 per cent responded yes but 44 per cent of governors responded that teachers should not take home circumstances into account. Teachers were asked what allowances they made to support those students who were having difficulty. 53 per cent

of teachers reported that they supported the students in school, 42 per cent gave students extra time, 3 per cent gave students extra resources and 3 per cent of teachers gave the students their email address (see figures 6.25, 6.26 6.28, 6.30, 6.32 and tables 6.27, 6.28 6.30, 6.32, 6.34 in appendix 28).

Comparing the results of the question “Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?” across schools the majority of teachers from all schools reported that they were aware which of their students had difficulty, with teachers from two schools giving a 100 per cent positive response. Teachers from those two schools and one other, all made allowances for students in those circumstances. One of those schools was one of the lowest achieving schools (school A); however, teachers from that school did not indicate what sort of allowances they made. The majority of support given by the schools was either through support in school or by giving the students extra time to complete the work. Three of the schools gave students extra time and one supported with extra resources or by providing an email contact (see figures 6.27, 6.29, 6.31 and tables 6.29, 6.31, 6.33, 6.35 below).

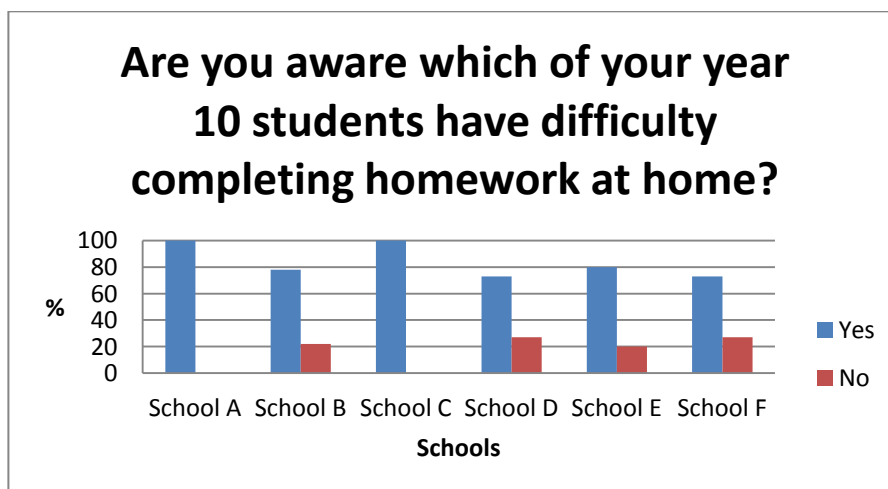


Figure 6.27: Frequency chart - Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.29: Frequency chart - Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Teachers			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0
School B	7	78	2	22
School C	7	100	0	0
School D	8	73	3	27
School E	8	80	2	20
School F	8	73	3	27

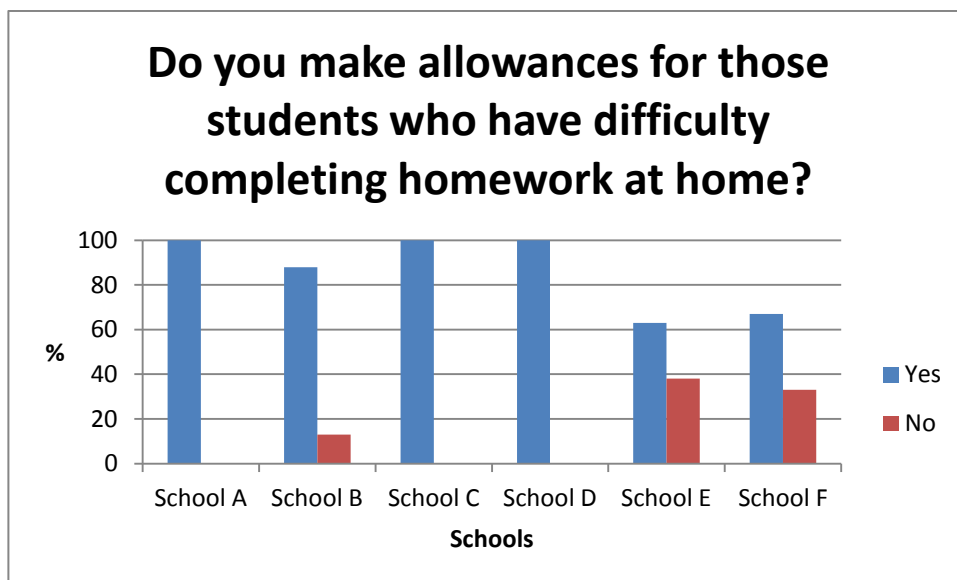


Figure 6.29: Frequency chart - Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.31: Frequency chart - Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0
School B	7	88	1	13
School C	7	100	0	0
School D	8	100	0	0
School E	5	63	3	38
School F	6	67	3	33

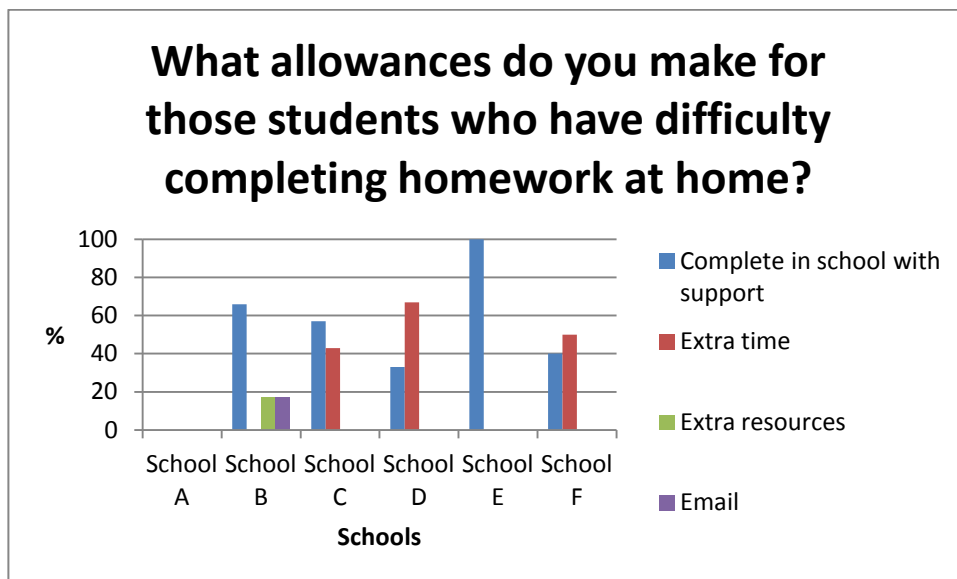


Figure 6.31: Frequency chart - What allowances do you make for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.33: Frequency chart - What allowances do you make for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Complete in school with support		Extra time		Extra resources		Email	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	4	66	0	0	1	17	1	17
School C	4	57	3	43	0	0	0	0
School D	2	33	4	67	0	0	0	0
School E	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School F	3	40	3	50	0	0	0	0

Table 6.35: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to the difficulty students have in completing homework at home

	Teachers
Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?	80%
Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?	65%

Summary

- The majority of teachers stated that they knew which of their students had difficulty completing homework and that there was very little difference between boys and girls. Most made allowances for this in the form of extra support or extra time.
- There were no significant differences between the responses given by schools.

6.4.5 Help at home

The majority of students (82 per cent) at all schools reported that they needed some help either "always" (22 per cent) or "sometimes" (60 per cent). The majority of student respondents at the highest achieving school (school B)

needed help with their homework at some point with 88 per cent stating "always".

Students and families were asked whether the support was available if they needed help completing homework at home. Students (73 per cent) and families (79 per cent) agreed that help was given if needed.

Students were asked who supported them and the majority responded that it was either, their mother (42 per cent), their father (27 per cent) or a sibling (28 per cent) who helped them.

Families were asked if they had time to support homework. 27 per cent stated "always" and 63 per cent "sometimes". Only 23 per cent stated that they did not think that they should be expected to give help with homework.

47 per cent of families stated that they felt confident in supporting homework.

Finally families were asked what additional support they thought schools could give to help them in supporting homework and they responded with online support, subject specific support, information booklets and clear explanations (see figures 6.33, 6.35, 6.36 and tables 6.36, 6.38, 6.39 in appendix 28).

Students and families were asked if they received or gave help at home. Most Families helped to some extent either "always" or "sometimes", however, 75 per cent of students at school C stated that they needed help at some point and yet 60 per cent of their families stated that they "never" helped. The results for students and families at school D were identical, indicating that students received the amount of help they required at home. Students and families at the other three schools, A, E and F, all reported that

they "sometimes" needed help and "sometimes" gave help. Only 20 per cent of families at the highest achieving school (school B) always helped their children at this school (see figures 6.34, 6.37, 6.38 and tables 6.37, 6.40, 6.41 below).

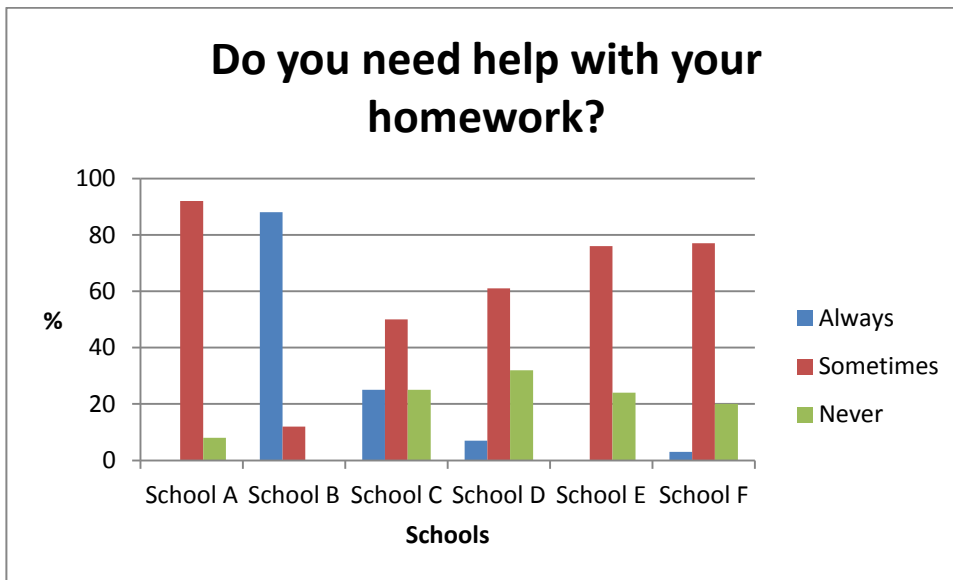


Figure 6.34: Frequency chart - Do you need help with your homework?

Table 6.37: Frequency chart - Do you need help with your homework?

	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	11	92	1	8
School B	23	88	3	12	0	0
School C	1	25	2	50	2	25
School D	2	7	17	61	9	32
School E	0	0	19	76	6	24
School F	1	3	24	77	6	20

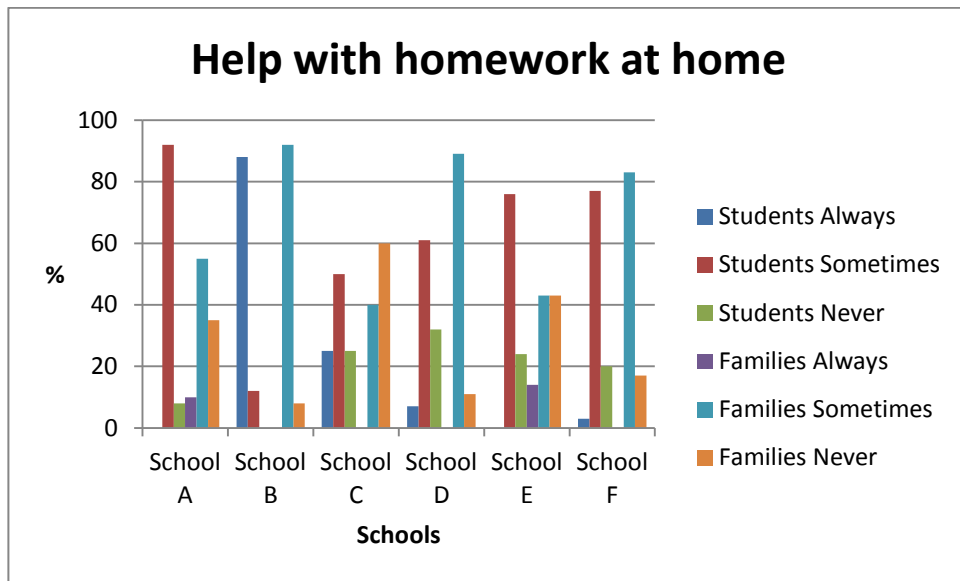


Figure 6.37: Frequency chart - Help with homework at home.

Table 6.40: Frequency chart - Help with homework at home.

	Students						Families					
	Always		Sometimes		Never		Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	11	92	2	8	2	10	11	55	7	35
School B	23	88	3	12	0	0	0	0	11	92	1	8
School C	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0	2	40	3	60
School D	2	7	17	61	9	32	0	0	16	89	2	11
School E	0	0	19	76	8	24	1	14	3	43	3	43
School F	1	3	24	77	6	20	0	0	5	83	1	17

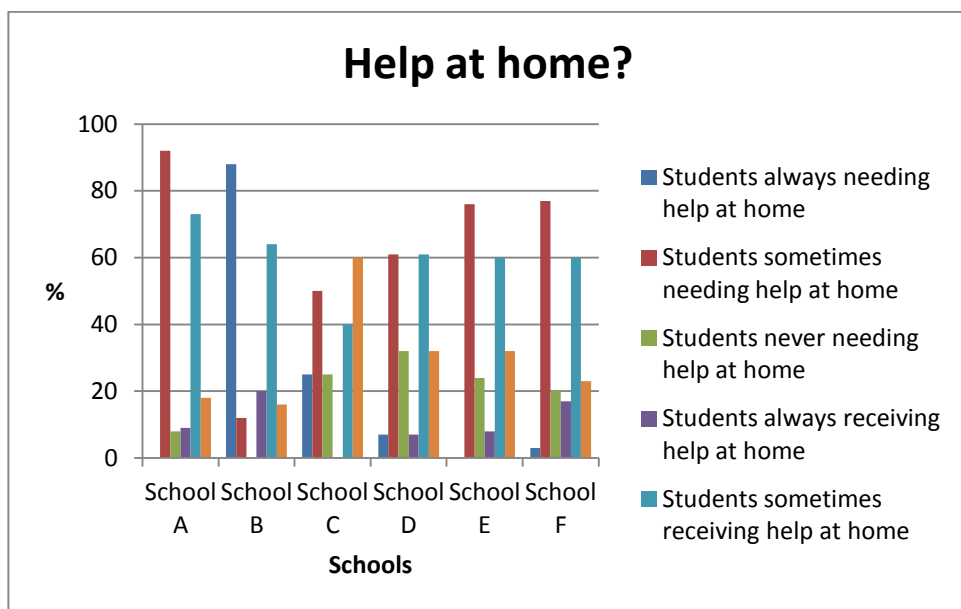


Figure 6.38: Frequency chart – Needing and receiving help with homework at home.

Table 6.41: Frequency chart - Needing and receiving help with homework at home.

	Students											
	Needing help						Receiving help					
	Always		Sometimes		Never		Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	11	92	1	8	1	9	8	73	2	18
School B	23	88	3	12	0	0	5	20	16	64	4	16
School C	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0	2	40	3	60
School D	2	7	17	61	9	32	2	7	17	61	9	32
School E	0	0	19	76	6	24	2	8	15	60	8	32
School F	1	3	24	77	6	20	5	17	18	60	7	23

The majority of families (average of 90 per cent) at the two lower achieving schools (schools A and E) either sometimes or never had time to help with homework compared with the majority of families (average of 92 per cent) of the higher achieving schools (schools B, D and F) who gave help at some point.

Families were divided, when asked about confidence, with the majority of families (average of 71 per cent) from three schools (schools C, E and F) stating that they felt confident and the majority of families (average of 63 per cent) from the other three schools (schools A, B and D) not feeling as confident to help with homework. There was no pattern of confidence in supporting homework from either higher or lower achieving schools (see figures 6.39, 6.41, 6.43 and tables 6.42, 6.44, 6.46 in appendix 28 and figures 6.40, 6.42, 6.44 and tables 6.43, 6.45, 6.47, 6.48 below).

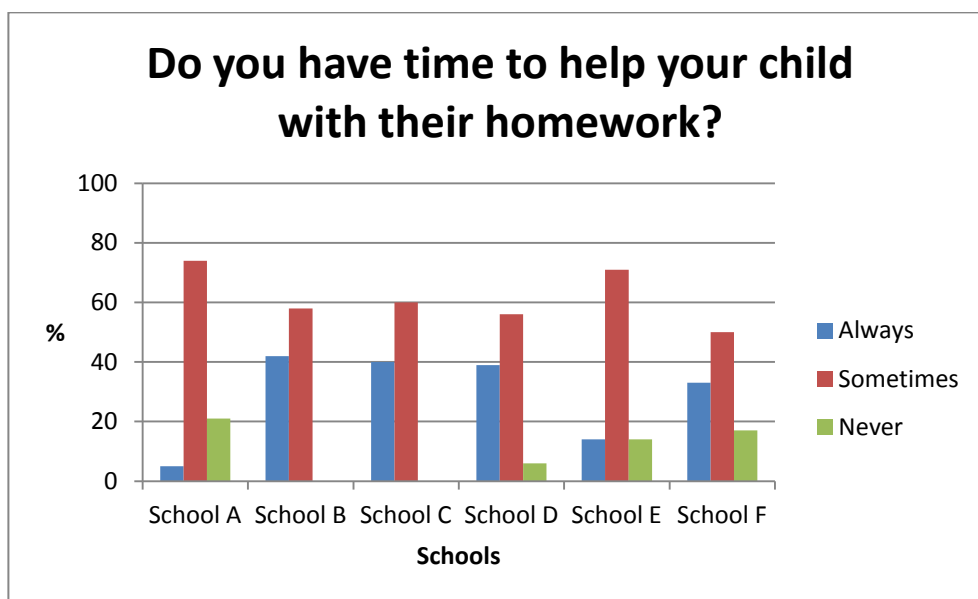


Figure 6.40: Frequency chart - Do you have time to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.43: Frequency chart - Do you have time to help your child with their homework?

	Families					
	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	5	14	74	4	21
School B	5	42	7	58	0	0
School C	2	40	3	60	0	0
School D	7	39	10	56	1	6
School E	1	14	5	71	1	14
School F	2	33	3	50	1	17

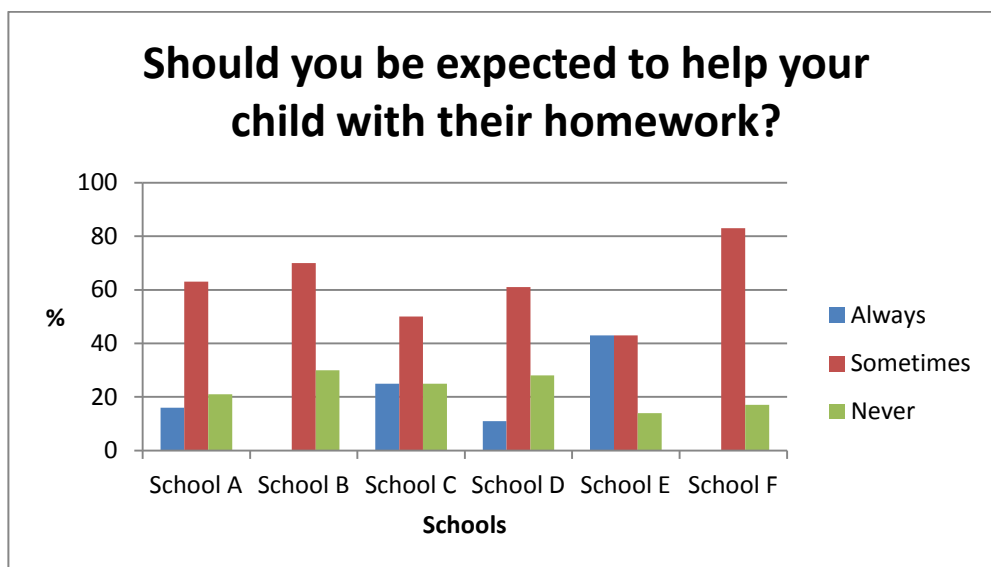


Figure 6.42: Frequency chart - Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.45: Frequency chart - Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?

	Families					
	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	3	16	12	63	4	21
School B	0	0	7	70	3	30
School C	1	25	2	50	1	25
School D	2	11	11	61	5	28
School E	3	43	3	43	1	14
School F	0	0	5	83	1	17

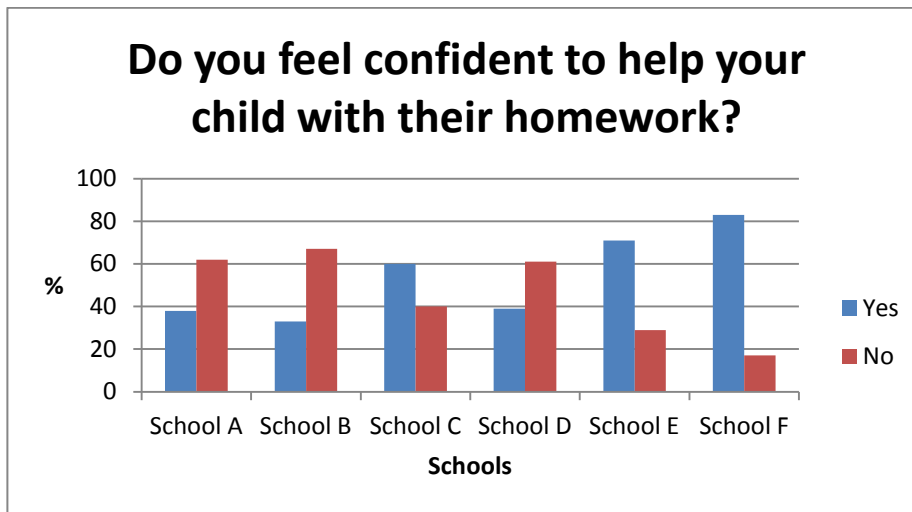


Figure 6.44: Frequency chart - Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.47: Frequency chart - Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?

Families				
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	8	38	13	62
School B	3	33	6	67
School C	3	60	2	40
School D	7	39	11	61
School E	5	71	2	29
School F	5	83	1	17

Table 6.48: Frequency chart - Responses to questions related to families helping with homework

	Families		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Do you help with homework?	4%	75%	21%
Do you have time to help your child with their homework?	27%	63%	10%
Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?	17%	61%	23%
Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?	Yes 47%	No 53%	n/a

Summary

- The majority of students at five schools stated that they needed help at some point with their homework.
- All the student respondents at the highest achieving school needed help with their homework at some point.
- The majority of families at all schools stated that their children needed help with some homework.
- The majority of families at the two lower achieving schools either sometimes or never had time to help with homework.
- There was no pattern of reported confidence in supporting homework between the higher or lower achieving schools

6.5 Completing Homework

6.5.1 Amount of homework

The amount of homework set varied across the schools. Both students and families stated that, on average, between thirty minutes and sixty minutes was set each night. 17 per cent of students stated that they did not receive any homework, whereas, 6 per cent received over 120 minutes. 64 per cent of students and 62 per cent of families stated that between thirty minutes and 120 minutes was set each night (see figure 6.45 and table 6.49 in appendix 28).

The majority of students (61 per cent) from the lowest achieving school (school A) stated that they did not receive any homework. The majority of students from four schools (schools B, D, E and F) were set homework which should take between thirty minutes and one hour to complete. Only two schools (schools C and F) set any homework lasting more than two hours (see figure 6.46 and table 6.50 below).

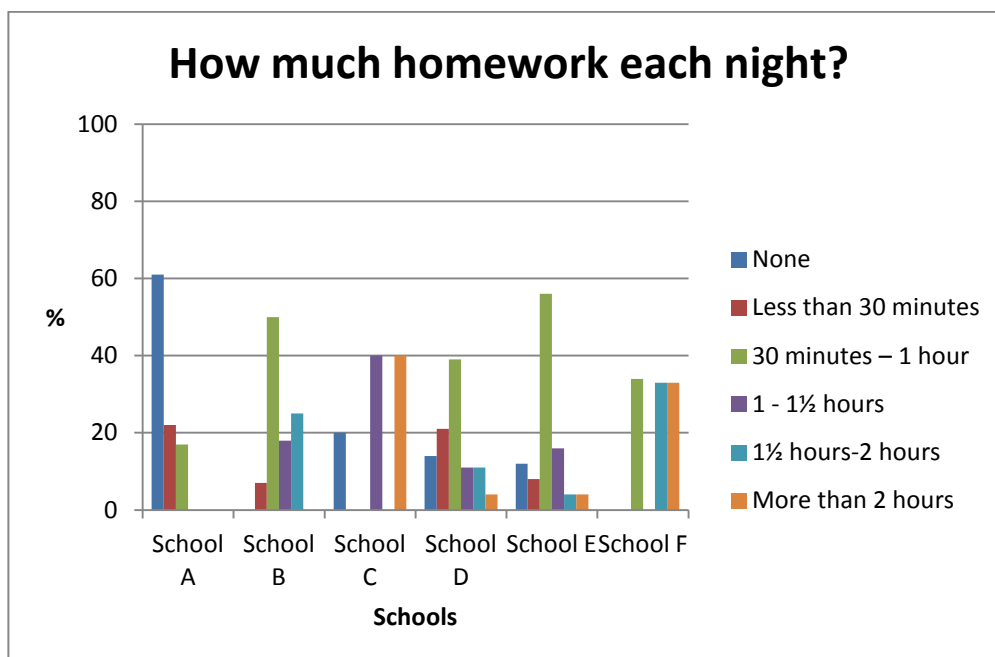


Figure 6.46: Frequency chart - How much homework each night? Student responses

Table 6.50: Frequency chart - How much homework each night? Student responses

	School A		School B		School C		School D		School E		School F	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	11	61	0	0	1	20	4	14	3	12	0	0
Less than 30 minutes	4	22	2	7	0	0	6	21	2	8	0	0
30 minutes – 1 hour	3	17	14	50	0	0	11	39	14	56	3	34
1 - 1½ hours	0	0	5	18	2	40	3	11	4	16	0	0
1½ hours - 2 hours	0	0	7	25	0	0	3	11	1	4	2	33
More than 2 hours	0	0	0	0	2	40	1	4	1	4	2	33
	18	100	28	100	5	100	28	100	25	100	7	100

Summary

- Most students and families agreed that on average between thirty minutes and sixty minutes of homework was set each night.
- The majority of students from the lowest achieving school stated that they did not receive any homework.

6.5.2 How long does it take to complete each subject?

Both students and families stated that drama took the longest to complete with teachers giving eighty minutes to complete the work and students stating that it took eighty-six minutes. Only drama, mathematics, art and business studies homework took students longer to complete than teachers suggested it should take, with business studies and mathematics on average taking ten minutes longer than was planned and art taking twenty minutes longer than was expected. For all other subjects students took less time to complete the work than their teachers expected them to, with music having the greatest difference (thirty-six minutes) followed by humanities (seventeen minutes), English (sixteen minutes) and languages (fourteen minutes) (see figure 6.47 and table 6.51 in appendix 28).

Summary

- Only drama, mathematics, art and business studies homework took students longer to complete than teachers suggested it should take.
- Both students and teachers stated that drama took the longest to complete.
- All other subjects took less for students to complete than their teachers expected them to.

6.5.3 Is this the right amount of homework?

Across all schools, both families (60 per cent) and students (56 per cent) agreed that the amount was “about right”. However 17 per cent of families and 5 per cent of students thought it was “not enough” (see figure 6.48 and table 6.52 in appendix 28).

The students’ and families’ responses from each school were compared. The majority of students from three schools stated that they thought that they received too much homework and these were the faith school (school C) and two of the highest achieving schools (schools B and F). The majority of students (39 per cent) at the lowest achieving school (school A) stated that they did not receive any homework and this was supported by their family responses which showed 25 per cent of families agreeing. The majority of families from all other schools except one (school E) responded that they thought their children received about the right amount of homework (see figure 6.49 and table 6.53 below).

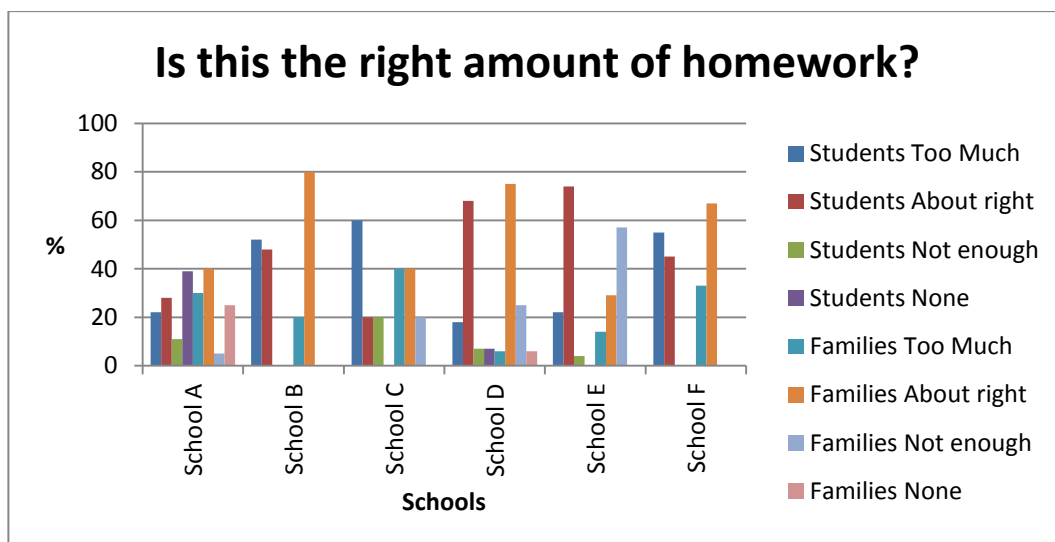


Figure 6.49: Frequency chart - Is this the right amount of homework?

Table 6.53: Frequency chart - Is this the right amount of homework?

			School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Students	Too much	n	4	13	3	5	5	16
		%	22	52	60	18	22	55
	About right	n	5	12	1	19	17	13
		%	28	48	20	68	74	45
	Not enough	n	2	0	1	2	1	0
		%	11	0	20	7	4	0
	None	n	7	0	0	2	0	0
		%	39	0	0	7	0	0
Families	Too much	n	6	2	2	1	1	2
		%	30	20	40	6	14	33
	About right	n	8	8	2	12	2	4
		%	40	80	40	75	29	67
	Not enough	n	1	0	1	4	4	0
		%	5	0	20	25	57	0
	None	n	5	0	0	1	0	0
		%	25	0	0	6	0	0

Summary

- The majority of families and students agreed that the amount of homework set was “about right”.
- The majority of students from the two highest achieving schools stated that they thought that they received too much homework.
- The majority of students at the lowest achieving school stated that they did not receive any homework.
- The majority of families from all other schools thought their children received about the right amount of homework.

6.5.4 Do students complete homework?

Most teachers responded that the students completed their homework with “sometimes” 43 per cent and “usually” 45 per cent. All subjects were

represented in the “always” response. Only 1 teacher responded that students “never” completed their homework (see figure 6.50 and table 6.54 in appendix 28).

This question was compared across the different schools. Teachers from the highest achieving school (school B) stated that over 90 per cent of their students either always or usually completed their homework. However, in another high achieving school it was found that the majority of students (school F) only sometimes completed their homework. Four schools A, B, D and E stated that the majority of their students either always or usually completed their homework. Teachers (4 per cent) from one of the lower achieving schools (school E) stated that students never completed their homework. The students from the same school stated that they did not receive homework (12 per cent) (see figure 6.51 and table 6.55 below).

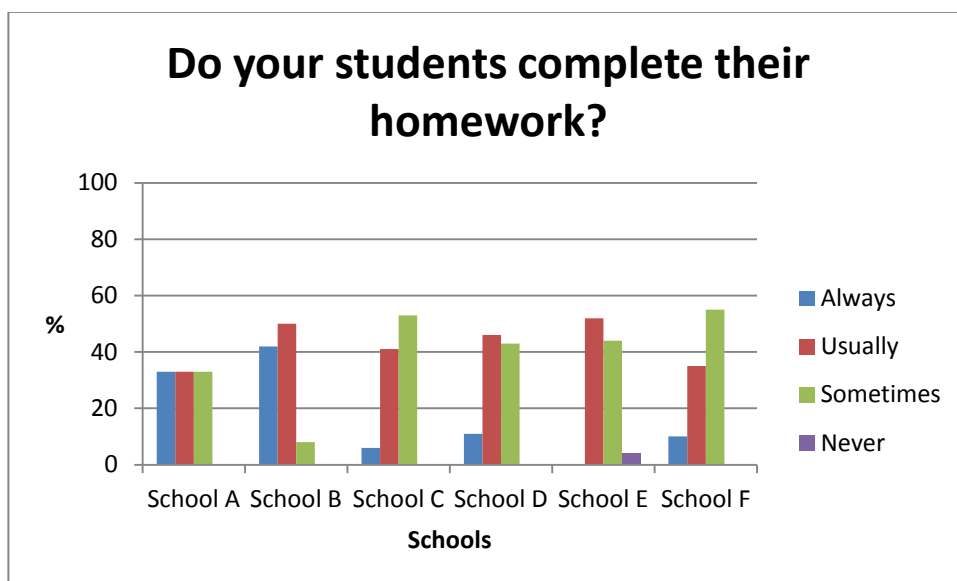


Figure 6.51: Frequency chart - Do your students complete their homework?

Table 6.55: Frequency chart - Do your students complete their homework?

	Teachers							
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	33	1	33	1	33	0	0
School B	5	42	6	50	1	8	0	0
School C	1	6	7	41	9	53	0	0
School D	3	11	13	46	12	43	0	0
School E	0	0	13	52	11	44	1	4
School F	2	10	7	35	11	55	0	0

Summary

- Most teachers responded that their students either “sometimes” or “usually” completed their homework.
- Teachers from the highest achieving school stated that the majority of their students either always or usually completed their homework.
- Teachers from the one of the lower achieving school stated that students never completed their homework.

6.5.5 Time given to complete homework

When comparing the schools, the majority of responses from both teachers and students from all but one school were in agreement that students were given up to a week to complete homework. The teachers and students from the lowest achieving school (school A) responded differently in that all teachers stated that they gave three days in which to complete homework, whereas 50 per cent of students stated that it was up to a week. Some students from the two lowest achieving school stated that they were only given one day and these were the two lowest achieving schools (school A, 18 per cent and school F, 3 per cent). No teachers from these two schools gave this response (see figure 6.52 and table 6.56 in appendix 28 and figure 6.53 and table 6.57 below).

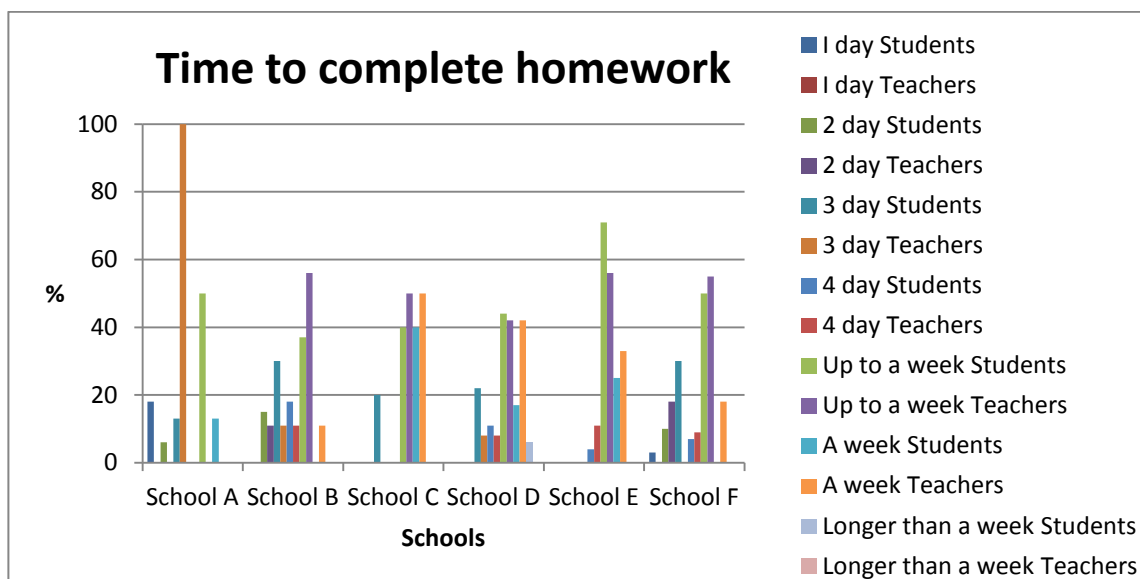


Figure 6.53: Frequency chart - Time given to complete homework?

Table 6.57: Frequency chart - Time given to complete homework?

		School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
I day Students	n	3	0	0	0	0	1
	%	18	0	0	0	0	3
I day Teachers	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 day Students	n	1	4	0	0	0	3
	%	6	15	0	0	0	10
2 day Teachers	n	0	1	0	0	0	2
	%	0	11	0	0	0	18
3 day Students	n	2	8	1	4	0	9
	%	13	30	20	22	0	30
3 day Teachers	n	1	1	0	1	0	0
	%	100	11	0	8	0	0
4 day Students	n	0	5	0	2	1	2
	%	0	18	0	11	4	7
4 day Teachers	n	0	1	0	1	1	1
	%	0	11	0	8	11	9
Up to a week Students	n	8	10	2	8	17	15
	%	50	37	40	44	71	50
Up to a week Teachers	n	0	5	3	5	5	6
	%	0	56	50	42	56	55
A week Students	n	2	0	2	3	6	0
	%	13	0	40	17	25	0
A week Teachers	n	0	1	3	5	3	2
	%	0	11	50	42	33	18
Longer than a week Students	n	0	0	0	1	0	0
	%	0	0	0	6	0	0
Longer than a week Teachers	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0

Summary

- The majority of both teachers and students stated “up to a week” in which to complete homework.
- The teachers and students from the lowest achieving school responded differently in that all teachers stated that they gave three days in which to complete homework, whereas 50 per cent of students stated that it was up to a week.

6.5.6 Feedback given on homework

Great variations of answers came when the teachers and students were asked when feedback was given. 76 per cent of teachers stated that they gave feedback one week or less after homework was handed in, but only 37 per cent students agreed with this. 31 per cent of students stated that they never received feedback compared with 0 per cent of teachers (see figure 6.54 and table 6.58 in appendix 28).

The majority of students (53 per cent) from the lowest achieving school stated that they never received feedback, however, 100 per cent of their teachers stated that they gave feedback with 24 hours. The majority of students at school B (56 per cent) were in agreement with their teachers who all stated that they gave feedback in less than a week. This was the highest achieving school. The majority of teachers at three schools (schools C, D and F) stated that they gave feedback in less than a week compared with the majority of students from the same schools who stated that it was more than a week. The majority of students, 62 per cent, at another low achieving school (school E) responded that they never received feedback, whereas the majority of their teachers (56 per cent) stated that they gave feedback in less than a week (see figure 6.55 and table 6.59 below).

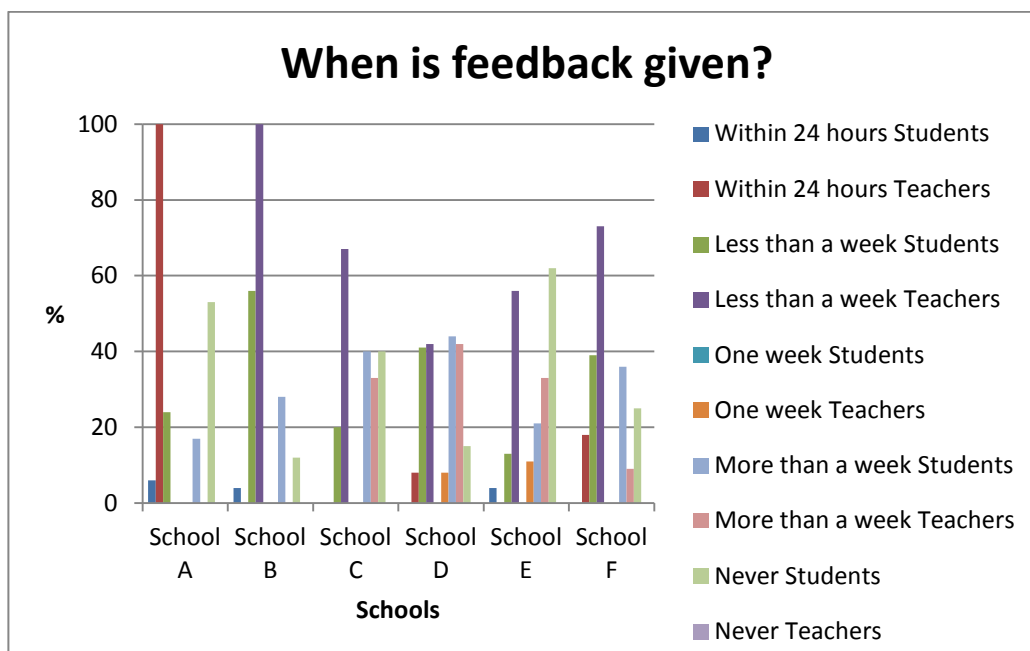


Figure 6.55: Frequency chart - When is feedback given?

Table 6.59: Frequency chart - When is feedback given?

		School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Within 24 hours Students	n	1	1	0	0	1	0
	%	6	4	0	0	4	0
Within 24 hours Teachers	n	1	0	0	1	0	2
	%	100	0	0	8	0	18
Less than a week Students	n	4	14	1	11	3	11
	%	24	56	20	41	13	39
Less than a week Teachers	n	0	9	4	5	5	8
	%	0	100	67	42	56	73
One week Students	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0
One week Teachers	n	0	0	0	1	1	0
	%	0	0	0	8	11	0
More than a week Students	n	3	7	2	12	5	10
	%	17	28	40	44	21	36
More than a week Teachers	n	0	0	2	5	3	1
	%	0	0	33	42	33	9
Never Students	n	9	3	2	4	15	7
	%	53	12	40	15	62	25
Never Teachers	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0

Summary

- The majority of students and teachers at the highest achieving school agreed that feedback was given in less than a week.
- The majority of teachers at the two lowest achieving schools stated that they gave feedback either within twenty four hours or in less than a week compared with the majority of students at the same schools stated that they never received feedback.

6.5.7 Differentiation and lesson plans

Teachers were asked if they set differentiated homework and 16 per cent responded "yes", 49 per cent "sometimes", 25 per cent "rarely" and 10 per cent "never" differentiated homework. They were also asked that if they did differentiate homework how this was undertaken. 64 per cent differentiated homework by task, 32 per cent by the resources used, 2 per cent by outcome and 2 per cent by the amount of work expected to be completed. Teachers were also asked if they included homework in their lesson plans. 29 per cent always included it and 51 per cent sometimes included it (see figures 6.56, 6.58 and 6.60 and tables 6.60, 6.62 and 6.64 in appendix 28).

The only teacher from school A who responded to this question stated that they always differentiated homework. The majority of teachers from schools B, C and D sometimes differentiated homework, whereas the majority of teachers from F rarely differentiated homework. Teachers from school E were divided between sometimes and never giving differentiated homework. (see figures 6.57, 6.59, 6.61 and tables 6.61, 6.63, 6.65 below).

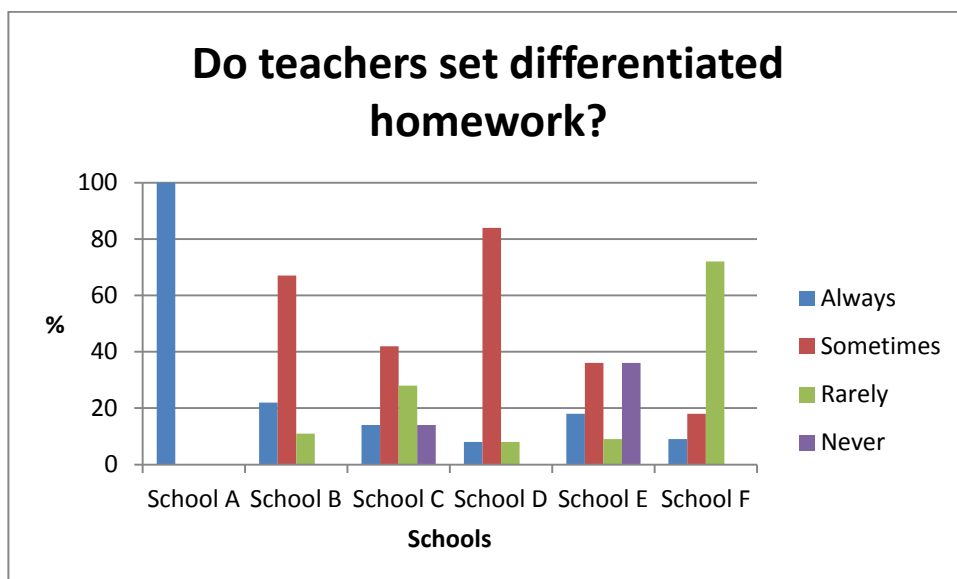


Figure 6.57: Frequency chart - Do teachers set differentiated homework?

Table 6.61: Frequency chart - Do teachers set differentiated homework?

	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	2	22	6	67	1	11	0	0
School C	1	14	3	42	2	28	1	14
School D	1	8	10	84	1	8	0	0
School E	2	18	4	36	1	9	4	36
School F	1	9	2	18	8	72	0	0

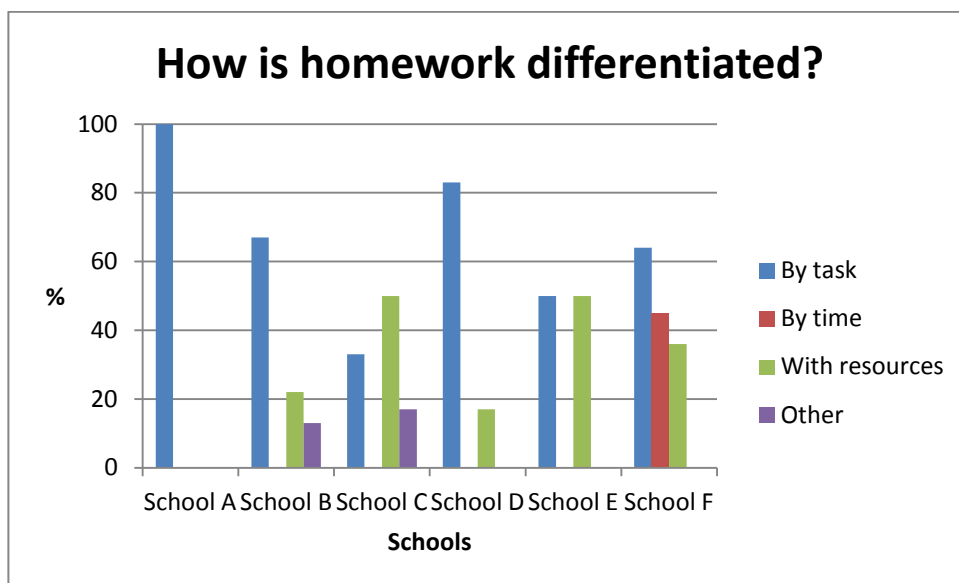


Figure 6.59: Frequency chart - How is homework differentiated?

Table 6.63: Frequency chart - How is homework differentiated?

	By task		By time		With resources		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	6	67	0	0	2	22	1	13
School C	2	33	0	0	3	50	1	17
School D	10	83	0	0	2	17	0	0
School E	4	50	0	0	4	50	0	0
School F	9	64	0	0	5	36	0	0

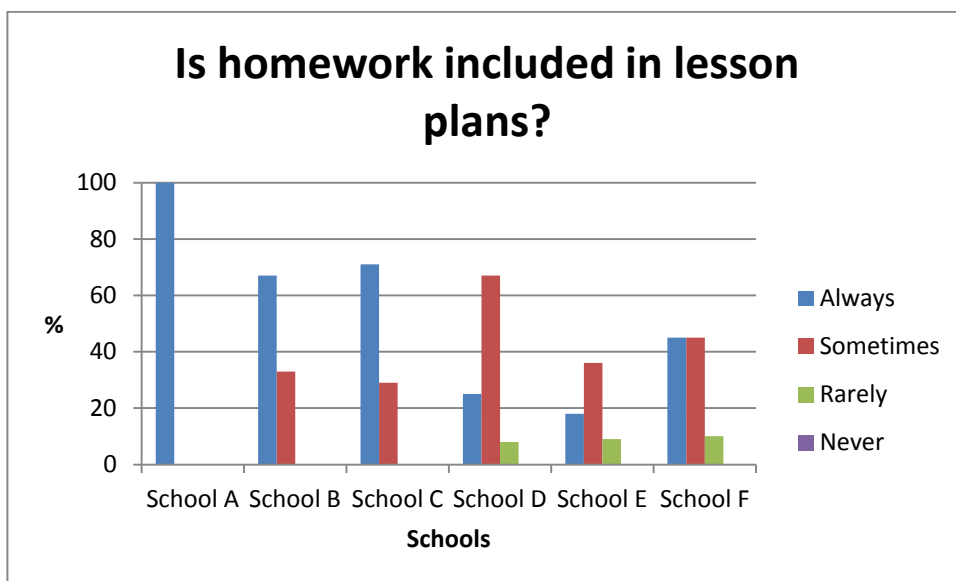


Figure 6.61: Frequency chart - Is homework included in lesson plans?

Table 6.65: Frequency chart - Is homework included in lesson plans?

	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
School C	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0
School D	3	25	8	67	1	8	0	0
School E	2	18	8	36	1	9	0	0
School F	5	45	5	45	1	10	0	0

Summary

- The majority of teachers reported that they differentiated homework and stated that this was by task and homework was either “always” or “sometimes” included in lesson plans.
- Teachers from one of the lowest achieving schools stated that they never differentiated homework.

6.5.8 Resources needed to complete homework

Both students (30 per cent) and families (31 per cent) stated that there was access to a “computer” at home. Students stated that “worksheets” (22 per

cent) and “books from school” (20 per cent) were also available, whereas families thought that “books from home” (20 per cent) was an available resource.

Teachers were asked if their students would need computer and internet access at home in order to complete their homework. 64 per cent of teachers stated that their students would need both. They were also asked if they knew if their students had computer and internet access. 59 per cent of teachers stated that they knew that their students had access but 33 per cent did not know, and yet 64 per cent of teachers stated that their students needed computer access (see figures 6.62, 6.64 and tables 6.66, 6.68 in appendix 28 and figures 6.66, 6.68 and tables 6.70, 6.72 below).

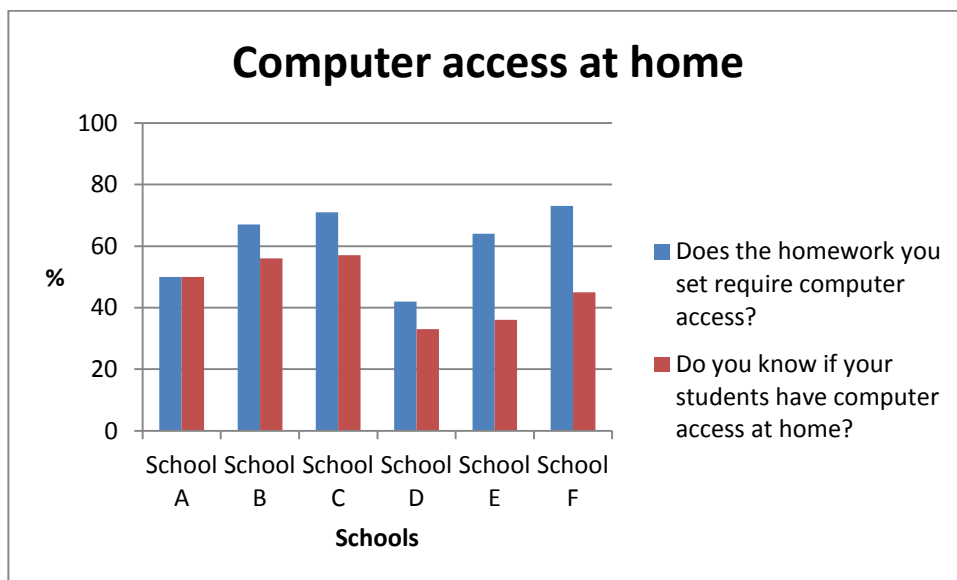


Figure 6.66: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have computer access?

Table 6.70: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have computer access?

	Teachers			
	Does the homework you set require computer access?		Do you know if your students have computer access at home?	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	50	1	50
School B	6	67	5	56
School C	5	71	4	57
School D	5	42	4	33
School E	7	64	4	36
School F	8	73	5	45

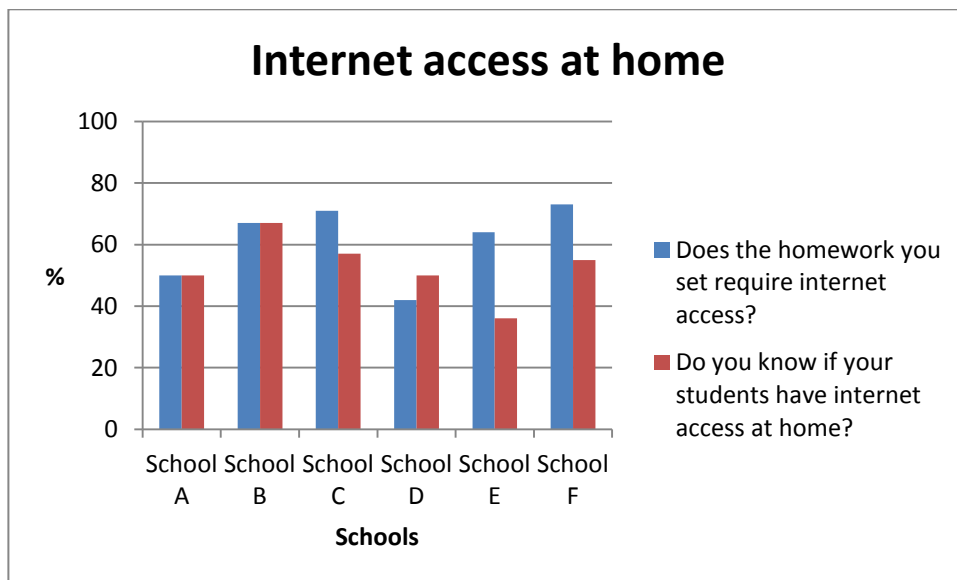


Figure 6.68: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have internet access?

Table 6.72: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have internet access?

	Teachers			
	Does the homework you set require internet access?		Do you know if your students have internet access at home?	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	50	1	50
School B	6	67	6	67
School C	5	71	4	57
School D	5	42	6	50
School E	7	64	4	36
School F	8	73	6	55

Schools were compared to see what resources were used at home. The lowest achieving school (school A) had the lowest percentage of students who had access to books at home, 16 per cent, compared with the students from the other schools, average 41 per cent. The same school also had the lowest percentage of students who had access to a computer at home, 42 per cent compared with the average of 82 per cent. Although student respondents from one school all stated that they had access to a computer at home the question was not asked if they had sole access to a computer (see figures 6.65, 6.67 and tables 6.69, 6.71 in appendix 28 and figure 6.63 and tables 6.67, 6.73 below).

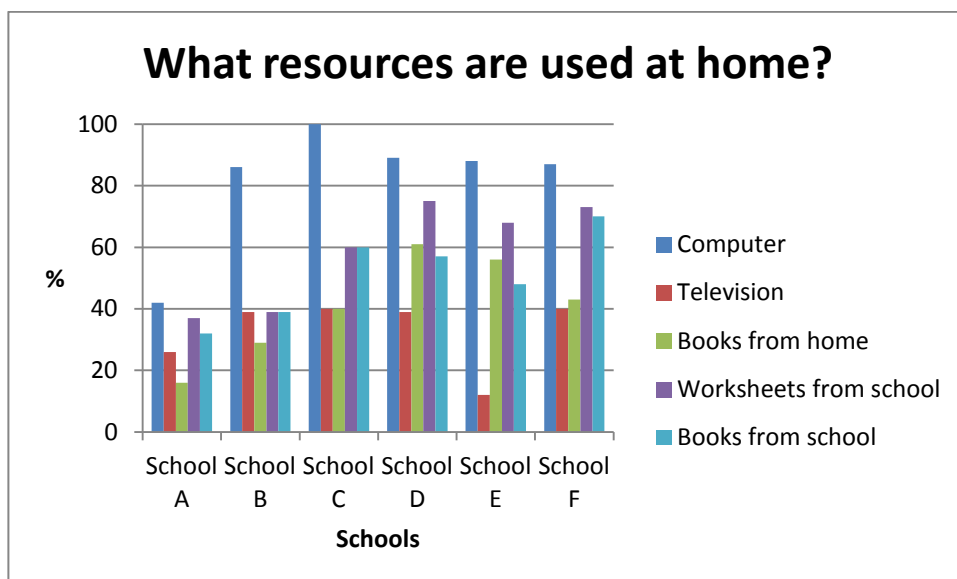


Figure 6.63: Frequency chart - What resources are used at home?

Table 6.67: Frequency chart - What resources are used at home?

	Students									
	Computer		Television		Books from home		Worksheets from school		Books from school	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	8	42	5	26	3	16	7	37	6	32
School B	24	86	11	39	8	29	11	39	11	39
School C	5	100	2	40	2	40	3	60	3	60
School D	25	89	11	39	17	61	21	75	16	57
School E	22	88	3	12	14	56	17	68	12	48
School F	26	87	12	40	13	43	22	73	21	70

Table 6.73: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to computer and internet access in order to complete homework at home

	Teachers
Do your students need computer and internet access in order to complete homework?	50%
Do you know if your students have internet access?	64%
Do you know if your students have computer access?	59%

Summary

- Fewer than half of the students at the lowest achieving school had access to a computer at home, whereas half the teachers stated that a computer was needed to complete homework.
- The majority of teachers did know if their students had access at home to a computer.
- More students from the higher achieving schools had access to computers and books compared with the other schools.

6.5.9 Which subject is most difficult to complete

More students (29 per cent) found mathematics homework more difficult to complete than any other subject followed by science (25 per cent) and English (12 per cent). These three subjects accounted for 66 per cent of the responses (see figure 6.69 and table 6.74 in appendix 28).

6.5.10 Most difficult type of homework

32 per cent of students stated that they found “projects” the most difficult to complete followed by “coursework” 30 per cent. These types of homework were long term pieces of work and perhaps it was the focus and maintaining motivation in completing the work which was found to be difficult. It is interesting, the majority of students said they found mathematics the most difficult to complete as this subject did not use projects or course work in their assessments (see figure 6.70 and table 6.75 in appendix 28).

There was little difference across schools in perceptions about the different types of homework. Students from the highest achieving school (school B) stated that they found "Projects" the most difficult type of homework to complete. The other two high achieving schools (schools D and F) both responded with "Coursework". Students from the lowest achieving school

(school A) were evenly divided between "Coursework", "Projects" and "Preparation for classwork" (see figure 6.71 and table 6.76 below).

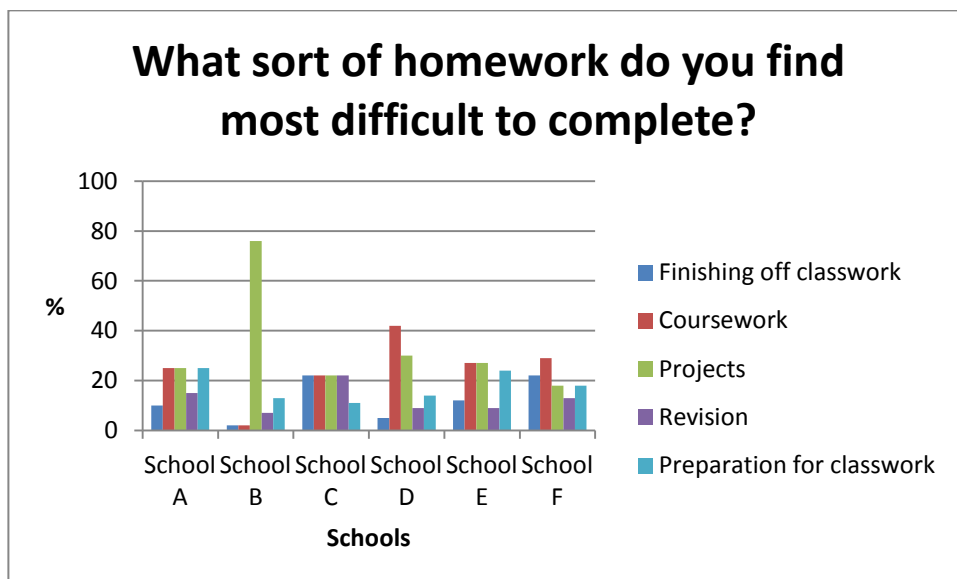


Figure 6.71: Frequency chart - What sort of homework is most difficult to complete?

Table 6.76: Frequency chart - What sort of homework is most difficult to complete?

	Finishing off classwork		Coursework		Projects		Revision		Preparation for classwork	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	2	10	5	25	5	25	3	15	5	25
School B	1	2	1	2	34	76	3	7	6	13
School C	2	22	2	22	2	22	2	22	1	11
School D	2	5	18	42	13	30	4	9	6	14
School E	4	12	9	27	9	27	3	9	8	24
School F	12	22	16	29	10	18	7	13	10	18

Summary

- The majority of students across all schools found coursework or projects the most difficult to complete as homework.

6.5.11 Preferred type of homework and working environment

Students preferred to be set “revision” as homework (33 per cent) followed by “finishing off classwork” (27 per cent). Only 7 per cent preferred to have “preparation for classwork” and yet this was one type of homework being favoured by schools and according to students many subjects used this type of homework.

The majority of students preferred to have company or background noise through music or television. 32 per cent of students preferred to “have music playing” and 14 per cent preferred to “have the television on” while working and only 7 per cent “prefer to work quietly”. 20 per cent “prefer to work on their own” with 16 per cent preferring to “work in the same room as other people” (see figures 6.72, 6.73 and tables 6.77, 6.78 in appendix 28).

Summary

- The majority of students preferred to be set “revision” or “finishing off classwork” as homework.
- A minority of students reported that they liked to complete their homework with music playing or the television on.

6.5.12 Sanctions for not completing homework

Respondents in all groups were asked “What sanctions are in place for not completing homework?” Three groups, teachers (28 per cent), families (33 per cent) and students (31 per cent) stated that “detention” was the type of sanction given more than any other. Two teachers stated that they gave detention even though officially their school (school F) did not give this type of sanction.

Students (26 per cent) and families (23 per cent) stated that “given another chance” was a sanction often used by teachers.

Some governors (23 per cent) and teachers (24 per cent) stated that “families informed” (23 per cent) was the sanction used.

The least used sanction as stated by governors, students and families was “reported to another teacher” which could be another subject teacher, head of department, a teacher with pastoral responsibility of a senior teacher.

1 per cent of teachers stated that “nothing happens” if homework was not completed and yet, reportedly, there were some forms of sanctions in place at all the schools.

Teachers were asked what they thought was the most effective sanction. 42 per cent of them stated that “informing their families” was the most effective with 37 per cent stating “detention” and 7 per cent stating “talking to student”. “Informing families” was also a highly rated sanction given by teachers and yet many teachers were not using this form of sanction and preferred to use detention.

All groups were asked if punishment worked and the majority of teachers (66 per cent), governors (63 per cent) and families (56 per cent) all agreed that punishments “sometimes” worked. However, the majority of students (43 per cent) stated that punishments “rarely” worked. A few respondents from all groups stated that punishments “never” worked: Students (13 per cent), families (17 per cent), teacher (6 per cent) and governors (6 per cent) (see figures 6.74, 6.75 and tables 6.79, 6.80 in appendix 28 and figure 6.76 and table 6.81 below).

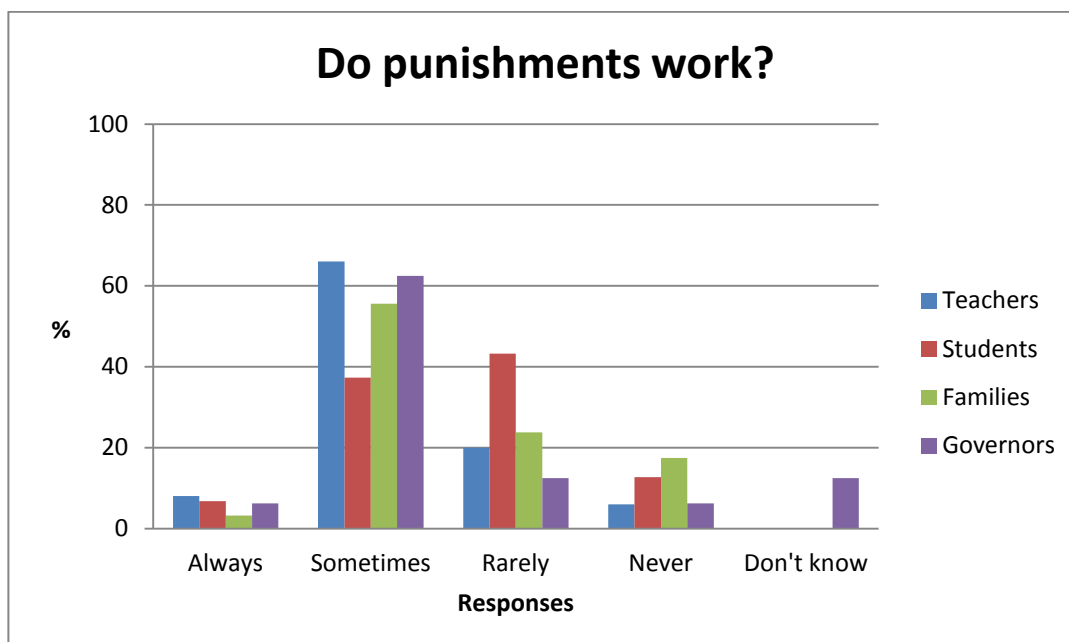


Figure 6.76: Frequency chart - Do punishments work?

Table 6.81: Frequency chart - Do punishments work?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Always	4	8	8	7	2	3	1	6
Sometimes	33	66	44	37	35	56	10	63
Rarely	10	20	51	43	15	24	2	13
Never	3	6	15	13	11	17	1	6
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13
	50	100	118	100	63	100	16	100

Summary

- Teachers, students and families agreed that the most frequently given sanction was "Detention".
- Teachers thought the most effective sanction was to inform parents followed by giving a detention.
- Teachers, governors and families agreed that punishments "sometimes" worked.
- A few respondents from all groups stated that punishment "never" worked.

6.6 The Management of Homework

6.6.1 The use of the homework planner

All schools stated that they used some form of planner to record homework and share this information with families. 94 per cent of teachers stated that homework was recorded in a planner whereas only 75 per cent of students stated that they actually recorded their work in their planner. All schools stated in their documentation that families were expected to have a look at what homework was being set and yet 16 per cent of families stated that they did not know if homework was being recorded (see figure 6.77 and table 6.82 in appendix 28).

The only school where there was a difference between respondents was the lowest achieving school (school A). Here, 100 per cent of teachers stated that homework was recorded in the planner compared with 10 per cent of students and 5 per cent of families. This was also the school where a significant number of students stated that no homework was set (see figure 6.78 and table 6.83 in appendix 28).

Summary

- The majority of students, teachers and families agreed that homework was recorded in a planner.
- The majority of respondents from five schools stated that they used the planner to record homework.
- Responses from students and families differed to teachers in the lowest achieving school.

6.6.2 Who checks the planner?

53 per cent of students, 52 per cent of teachers and 45 per cent of families stated that it was the form tutor who checked the planner more than anyone

else. 22 per cent of both teachers and students stated that it was the subject teacher who checked the planner, as it was the subject teacher who was setting homework perhaps they should be checking that the students had written their homework in their planner (see figure 6.79 and table 6.84 in appendix 28).

6.6.3 Monitoring homework

When it came to who monitored homework in school the teachers stated that it was the head of department (63 per cent) who checked that homework was set and feedback was given. The majority of the governors, 53 per cent, stated that they did not know who monitored homework (see figure 6.80 and table 6.85 in appendix 28).

6.6.4 Homework club

All the schools offered a homework club at some point during the school day and these clubs were either for all students, for those with specific needs or in specific subject areas. However, across all schools and all subjects, 10 per cent of teachers stated that there was no homework club at their school and 8 per cent did not know.

Although 58 per cent of students knew there was homework club only 5 per cent of students actually used the homework club with an average of two students from each school using this resource. No students from school C stated that they attended the homework club at that school. Only 63 per cent of governors and 50 per cent of families knew there was a homework club. When teachers were asked if the availability of subject specific support at homework clubs matched the homework timetable, only 31 per cent responded “yes” with 50 per cent “don’t know”. Teachers were also asked if they had to support the homework club as part of their work loading but only 26 per cent, across all schools, responded that they had this as part of their

work load (see figures 6.81, 6.83, 6.85 and tables 6.86, 6.88, 6.90 in appendix 28).

At the lowest achieving school (school A) only 50 per cent of both students and teachers and 42 per cent of families knew that there was a homework club. At the other lower achieving school (school E) although 73 per cent of teachers knew that there was a homework club, only 52 per cent of students and 29 per cent of families and 33 per cent of governors knew this. Teachers were asked if the homework timetable matched the availability of subject specific support at the homework club and only school (school F) responded positively to this with 64 per cent. The majority of teachers from school E (55 per cent) responded that they did not (see figures 6.82, 6.84, 6.86 and tables 6.87, 6.89, 6.91 below).

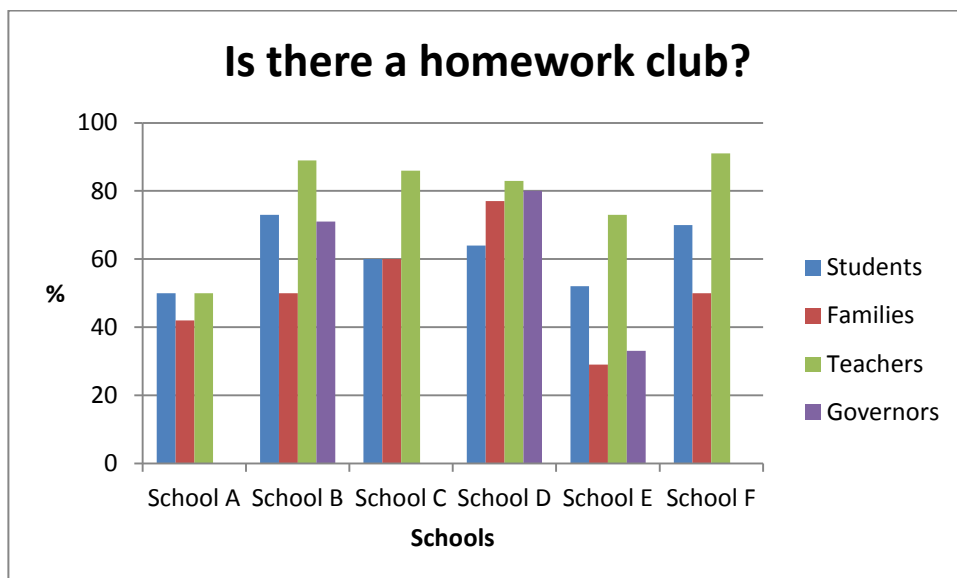


Figure 6.82: Frequency chart - Is there a homework club?

Table 6.87: Frequency chart - Is there a homework club?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	7	50	8	42	1	50	0	0
School B	19	73	6	50	8	89	5	71
School C	3	60	3	60	6	86	0	0
School D	18	64	10	77	10	83	4	80
School E	13	52	2	29	8	73	1	33
School F	14	70	3	50	10	91	0	0

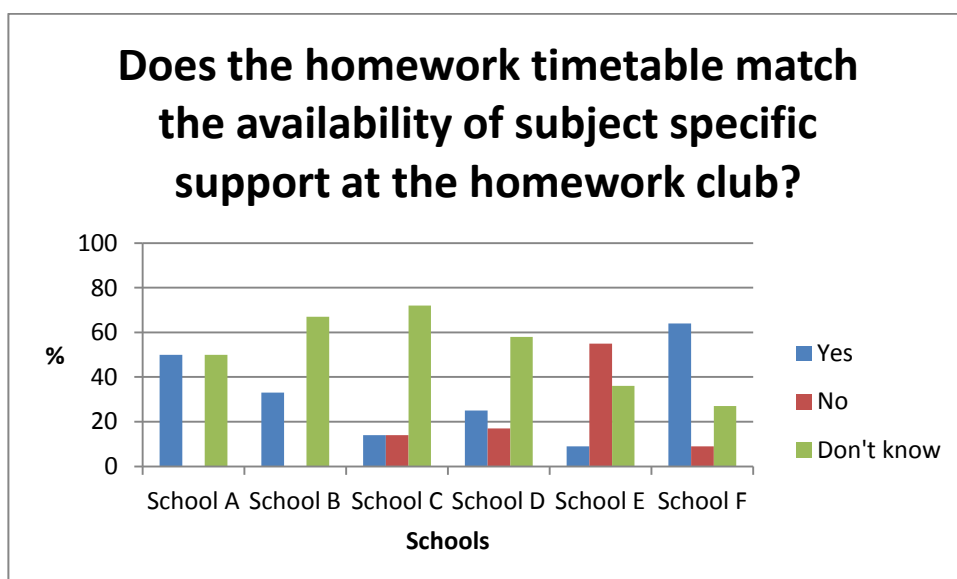


Figure 6.84: Frequency chart - Does the homework timetable match the availability of subject specific support at the homework club?

Table 6.89: Frequency chart - Does the homework timetable match the availability of subject specific support at the homework club?

	Yes		No		Don't know	
	n	%	No	%	n	%
School A	1	50	0	0	1	50
School B	3	33	0	0	6	67
School C	1	14	1	14	5	72
School D	3	25	2	17	7	58
School E	1	9	6	55	4	36
School F	7	64	1	9	3	27

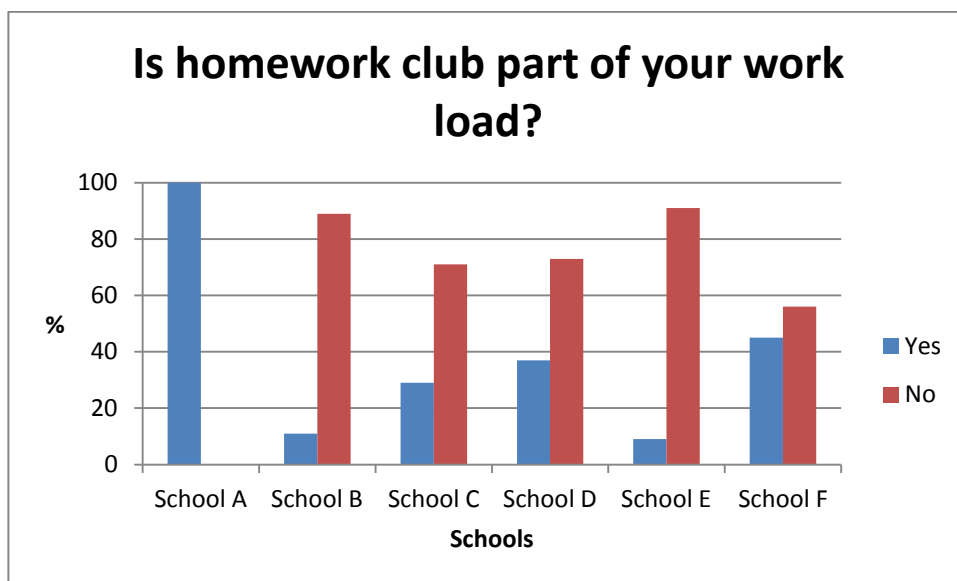


Figure 6.86: Frequency chart - Is homework club part of your work load?

Table 6.91: Frequency chart - Is homework club part of your work load?

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0
School B	1	11	8	89
School C	2	29	5	71
School D	3	37	8	73
School E	1	9	10	91
School F	5	45	6	56

Summary

- The majority of students, teachers and governors agreed that there was a homework club, but at the lowest achieving school only 50 per cent of students and teachers knew this.
- Only one third of teachers stated that the homework timetable matched subject specific homework clubs.
- The majority of teachers did not have to support the homework club as part of their work load.

6.6.5 Home-School Agreement

Legally both students and families should sign a home-school agreement, however the majority of students (61 per cent) and families (52 per cent) did not know if there was an agreement. The majority of teachers (74 per cent) stated that there was an agreement. 81 per cent of the governors responded “yes” (see figure 6.87 and table 6.92 in appendix 28).

When comparing the positive response from students, families, teachers and governors from all schools it was the lowest achieving school (school A) that had the lowest overall positive responses from students and families of 19 per cent, compared with the most positive responses from four other schools including the other lower achieving schools of between 24 per cent and 42 per cent. One of the higher achieving schools (school F) did not have any families giving a positive response to the question (see figure 6.88 and table 6.93 below).

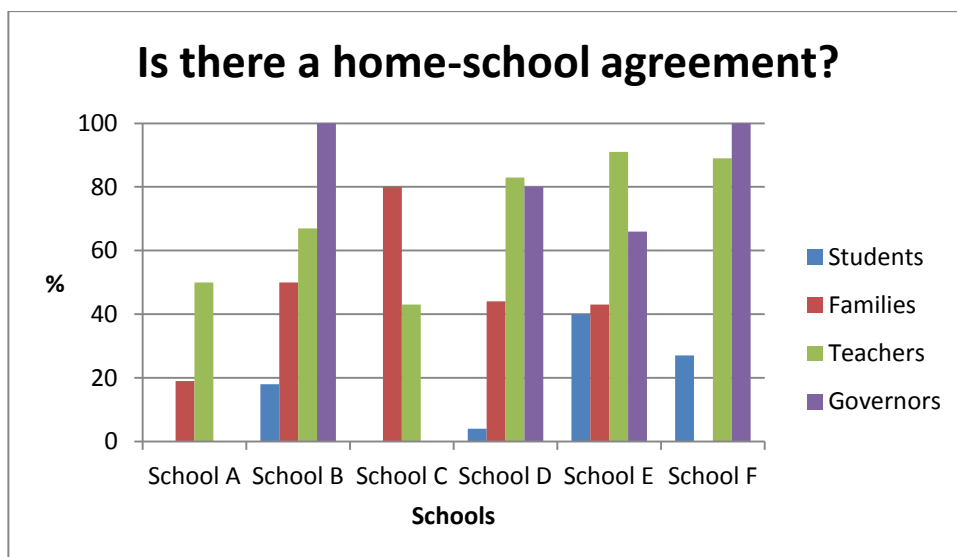


Figure 6.88: Frequency chart - Is there a home-school agreement?

Table 6.93: Frequency chart - Is there a home-school agreement?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	4	19	1	50	n/a	n/a
School B	5	18	6	50	6	67	7	100
School C	0	0	4	80	3	43	n/a	n/a
School D	1	4	8	44	10	83	4	80
School E	10	40	3	43	10	91	2	66
School F	8	27	0	0	8	89	0	100

Summary

- Proportionately fewer students and their families than teachers and governors reported they knew there was a home-school agreement.
- The largest majority of families who did not know that there was a home-school agreement were from the lowest achieving school.

6.6.6 Homework Policy

All the governors and teachers should know that there was a policy even if it was called something different, for example, a learning policy, but from school D, 6 per cent of governors stated that there was no policy and 13 per cent stated that they did not know, 4 per cent of teachers did not know if there was a policy. 58 per cent of families were not sure if there was a policy and although five of the schools had a range of “yes”, “no” and “don’t know” answers all the families at one school responded with “don’t know”. This school (school F) called the policy by a different name but it was available to families on the school website and referred to in the agreement and planner (see figure 6.89 and table 6.94 in appendix 28).

When comparing the positive responses from families, teachers and governors it can be seen that the majority of teachers knew that there was a homework policy with an average of 93 per cent, with teachers from four of the six school all giving 100 per cent positive answers. The other two schools

did not have a separate policy or document regarding homework but it was embedded in homework guidance. The four schools with 100 per cent positive response all had a policy referencing homework. There were some differences between the responses from the families when asked this question with a range of positive answers between 11 per cent and 50 per cent with an average of 40 between the types of school (see figure 6.90 and table 6.95 below).

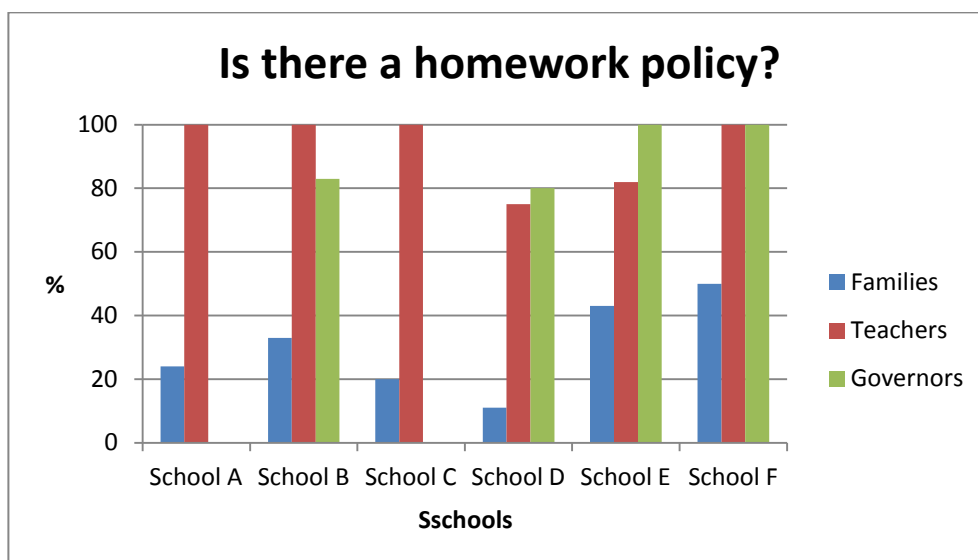


Figure 6.90: Frequency chart - Is there a homework policy?

Table 6.95: Frequency chart - Is there a homework policy?

	Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	5	24	2	100	n/a	n/a
School B	4	33	9	100	5	83
School C	1	20	7	100	n/a	n/a
School D	2	11	9	75	4	80
School E	3	43	9	82	3	100
School F	3	50	11	100	1	100

Summary

- Proportionately more teachers and governors knew there was a homework policy than families.

- There were no clear differences between the higher and lower achieving schools.

6.6.7 Whole school strategy

Only teachers and governors were asked if homework was part of a whole school strategy. All governors reported that it was (see figure 6.91 and table 6.96).

Teachers from four of the six schools gave a 100 percentage positive response to this question stating that homework was part of the whole school strategy. The two schools where some teachers were unsure were a higher achieving (school D) and a lower achieving school (school E) (see figure 6.92 and tables 6.97, 6.98 below).

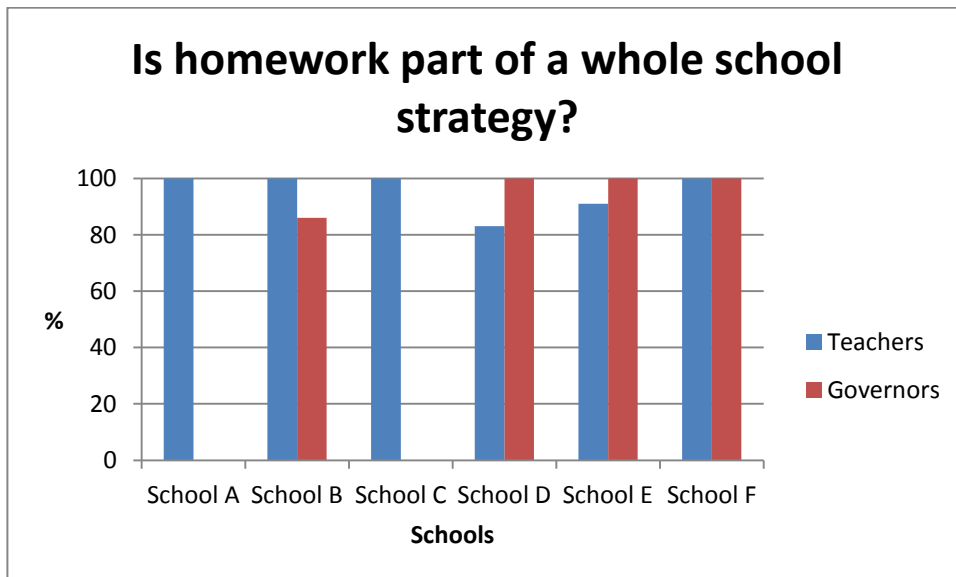


Figure 6.92: Frequency chart - Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

Table 6.97: Frequency chart - Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

	Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%
School A	2	100	n/a	n/a
School B	9	100	6	86
School C	7	100	n/a	n/a
School D	10	83	5	100
School E	10	91	3	100
School F	11	100	1	100

Table 6.98: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to home-school agreement, school policy and whole school strategy

	Students	Families	Teachers	Governors
Is there a home-school agreement?	20%	39%	74%	81%
Is there a homework policy	n/a	26%	96%	81%
Is homework part of a whole school strategy?	n/a	n/a	98%	100%

Summary

- Most teachers and all the governors were in agreement that homework was part of a whole school strategy.
- There were no noticeable differences between the higher and lower achieving schools.

6.7 Overview

The most significant points to emerge from the analysis of the questionnaires are identified below.

6.7.1 Setting homework

There were some differences, and degrees of differences, between respondents, regarding the issues of should homework be set, why it was set

and the impact it had on learning, grades, understanding classwork and the levels of stress it caused students.

Significantly more teachers and governors were in agreement that homework should be set compared with students and families. However, more students were in favour of homework compared with their families. Proportionately more families, teachers and governors from higher achieving schools agreed that homework should be set compared with those from the lower achieving schools.

Although all respondent groups were in agreement that homework was set to "reinforce what the students had done in class" significantly more students and families than teachers and governors thought it was set to "finish classwork". No school documents supported this and it was possibly why teachers and governors gave what was an expected response and not what was actually happening. However, if work was not understood in class then students may have difficulty in successfully completing it at home. Students also stated that they were given "revision" and "preparation for classwork" as types of homework. Although all respondents thought "revision" was the most effective type of homework they also agreed that it was not the most common type given. Therefore if schools knew that it was an effective type of homework the question is why is not set more often? The monitoring of homework will be discussed later and perhaps a reason why revision was not given is that it cannot be monitored as effectively as work produced at home.

Homework caused students stress, with a significant number of students, families and teachers in agreement about this, and with little difference between boys and girls. Students at higher achieving schools reported that they were more stressed about homework than students from lower achieving schools and this view was reinforced by their teachers. Alongside this, more

families, teachers and governors from higher achieving schools also stated that homework improved grades and was a valuable aid to learning. The higher achieving schools may be putting more pressure on their students to achieve and maintain grades and therefore the students felt stressed over homework. With schools in competition with each over student numbers, league tables, Ofsted and external perceptions, added pressure may be placed by those high achieving schools on their students and their families to complete homework.

6.7.2 The Home Environment

The majority of homework was completed at home and students felt that this had a negative effect on family activities. The majority of these students were from the higher achieving schools, and again, this could be due the pressure placed on them by their schools to achieve. Parents were required by the home-school agreement to provide a space to work at home and most students worked in their bedroom. This was reported to have a negative effect on family life as there was little interaction between members of the family, especially as most homework was completed between 3pm and 9pm. Not all students worked in their bedrooms and some worked in communal areas at home and preferred to do this. Some students liked some background noise through music or television when they were completing their homework.

The majority of teachers stated that they knew which of their students had difficulty completing their homework and most made allowances for this in the form of extra support, resources and extra time in which to complete it. The majority, but not all, also stated that they knew which of their students had access to a computer and about 64 per cent of teachers set homework requiring work to be completed on a computer. This may be in the form of writing, research or on-line homework activities. However, what teachers

may not be aware of is, some students may only have access to a shared computer and that computer may also be required by other members of the family, including others needing to complete their homework. This could result in added pressure put on students and their families. More students from higher achieving schools had access to more resources at home, including computers and books than students from lower achieving schools. Therefore, these students may have had more opportunity to complete their work to a higher standard.

Schools in this current study expected some family involvement in supporting their children with their homework and this was stated in their school documents as a purpose of homework. The majority of students stated that they needed help with their homework and this was confirmed by family respondents. All students from the highest achieving school needed help at some point. Although the majority of families at the three highest achieving schools supported their children, families at two lowest achieving schools did not give the same level of support. Relating this to a previous comment, the majority of families at the higher achieving schools reported homework as a valuable aid to learning and improved grades compared with the majority of families from lower achieving schools. Therefore there was likely to be a difference in support given by families. There was no significant difference between the higher and lower ability schools in how confident families felt in supporting with homework. However it was families from the highest and lowest achieving schools who stated that they did not feel confident and this could be that the standard of work expected from their children was beyond their capabilities.

6.7.3 Completing Homework

The guidelines for homework, introduced by David Blunkett in 1998 and scrapped by Michael Gove in 2012, suggested that Year Ten students should

receive between ninety and one hundred and fifty minutes each night. According to students and families they were receiving between thirty and sixty minutes each night with different subjects taking different amount of time.

Apart from drama, teachers across all schools gave an average time of between thirty and sixty minutes of homework per subject (drama took ninety minutes). When students were asked how long they took to complete their homework they stated that they did not take as long as teachers expected them to take in all subjects except Drama, Mathematics, Business Studies and Art. This current study did not ask what type of homework each subject gave so a comparison cannot be made between subject, type of homework and time given to complete it.

The majority of families and students agreed that the amount of homework set was "about right". However the majority of students from the two highest achieving schools stated that they thought that they received too much homework. This compared significantly with the majority of students at the lowest achieving school who stated that they did not receive any homework. It has already been discussed above how much stress students felt they were under due to homework and this was confirmed here as students from the same school stated that they received too much homework. Although students from the highest achieving schools felt they received too much homework their teachers stated that the majority of their students either always or usually completed their homework. Although students at the highest achieving schools felt that they received too much homework and they were stressed about it, they still completed it.

There was a difference between students and teachers when asked how long they were given to complete homework. Teachers said that they gave up to a

week and students said they were given less than a week. This was in contrast to the teachers at the two lowest achieving schools who stated that they gave feedback either within twenty four hours or in less than a week compared with the majority of their students who stated that they never received feedback. Hallam (2006) stated that feedback on homework was important if it was to be taken seriously by students.

As seen above teachers were aware of which students had difficulty completing homework and what allowances were made for them. The majority of teachers also stated that they differentiate homework either by task or with resources. Students found English, Mathematics and Science homework the most difficult subjects to complete, however teachers in all these subjects stated that they differentiated homework. The types of homework students found difficult were coursework or projects. This does not match with the subjects they found difficult as those subjects do not have coursework or projects as an assessment but English does have controlled assessment which would be completed under supervision in school. Therefore if they were given this type of homework in any subject it may be in preparation for their controlled assessment. The majority of students preferred to receive "revision" or "finishing off classwork" as homework and as discussed above all respondents thought "revision" was the most effective type of homework but it was not the most common type given.

6.7.4 The Management of Homework

All schools had sanctions in place for non-completion of homework. A significant number of families, teachers and governors agreed punishment worked, however, the majority of students disagreed and stated that punishment "rarely worked". The most used form of punishment at all schools was "detention", this included the school which stated in their documents that detention was not given as a punishment. Teachers stated

that the most effective punishment was to "inform parents", however, this was not as frequently used as "detention". Sanctions can be time-consuming for teachers as they had to be followed up therefore adding to their work load.

All schools use a form of planner to communicate with home and for students to write down their homework. The planner can be seen by parents and monitored by the school and the majority of respondents stated that it was the form tutor who monitored the planner. The form tutor would usually look at the planner during the registration or tutor based session and could see if it had been checked and signed and to see if there were any comments from families. The majority of respondents from five schools stated that they used the planner, however, the majority of families and students from the lowest achieving school stated that the planner was not used. This was in contrast to the teachers at the school who thought the planner was being used. Although it was the form tutor who checked the planner, the majority of teachers stated that it was the head of department who monitored homework was being set within the subject department.

Homework clubs were offered at all schools in some form, either before, during or after the school day and were open to either all students or students with specific educational or subject needs. However, only five per cent of all students actually used the homework club. This could be that the timing was not suitable for them and they had transport issues getting to and from school, the clubs clashed with extracurricular activities or perhaps due to peer pressure. Homework clubs did not always match the homework timetable and therefore it may not have been a suitable subject specific club for students to attend. Some teachers had the homework club on their timetable and would support subject specific sessions.

Legally schools do not have to have a homework policy but they must have a home-school agreement. All the schools had some form of policy referencing homework and this may have been a separate document or incorporated in a guidance booklet for parents, in the planner or as part of the home-school agreement. Teachers should be aware of this policy as they should be following the guidelines, however as can be seen above when discussing sanctions teachers do not always follow the school guidance. Students and families should be aware of the home-school agreement as they are required to sign it. A school must have an agreement in place, however, it is not binding and although parents sign to say that they accept what they are required to do in supporting homework, the school cannot hold them to it.

As with the policy, teachers should be aware if homework was part of the whole school strategy and all teachers from four schools knew that it was. Some teachers from the highest achieving and lowest achieving schools were unsure.

6.8 The four key questions in relation to the findings of the questionnaires

6.8.1 Comparison of the purpose of homework

"What is the purpose of homework?"

All schools stated in their documents and on-line why homework is set at that school. However, as can be seen from the evidence above this is not always followed by teachers. Although teachers maintain they are aware that homework causes some pupils difficulty and stress this may not always be addressed and it could be due to lack of actual awareness of the problems or time restraint in planning and setting homework. Pressure is placed on, and by schools to achieve higher grades each year but are they setting homework to achieve those higher grades?

6.8.2 Comparison of the type of homework

"What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?"

"Revision" was regarded by all respondents as the most effective type of homework and the preferred type of homework by students. "Finishing off classwork" was the least effective and yet this was the main type of homework set by teachers. Students found projects and coursework more difficult than other types of work and both types of work were possibly long term pieces of work needing concentration over time and continued motivation. Students may prefer short term pieces of work which were completed and they could then move on to the next activity of work. If schools want students to complete homework then should they set an effective type of work which students are more likely to complete?

6.8.3 Comparison of the home environment

"Does the home environment always support students completing homework, what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources?"

Homework affected family activities due to the time spent on homework and where homework was completed in the home. Schools may not always be aware of what some students may face at home including cultural, religious, financial or relationship issues. Students may not have access to space, resources or support.

6.8.4 Comparison of evidence against Hallam's four factors affecting homework

"What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?"

Political factor

The analysis showed that teachers and governors followed the official school guidelines and stated what was expected of them and it was only when teachers were asked for a view, did they actually answer questions with their own opinion and professional judgement rather than the following school policy. Hallam (2006) explained the homework affected the school factors including the reputation of the school.

Economic Factor

There was a difference in the responses between schools in the different catchments areas when asked about the value of homework, with more respondents in the higher achieving schools in the more affluent areas of the town stating that there was a value to homework, compared with the lower achieving schools in the not so affluent areas. However Hallam (2006) stated that regular homework undertaken by lower achieving students could result in higher grades than more able students who did not complete any homework. Respondents from the higher achieving schools perhaps saw the value of education in employment prospects and life choices.

Social Factor

Hallam (2004) stated that the family or social relationships can be complex regarding homework and can cause pressure. Although families may be have a positive influence in the form of monitoring homework, offering moral support and provide resources they may also have a negative affect when support or supervision is counterproductive. Hallam (2006) also stated that homework could have a negative effect on society as it decreased the time for participation in community activities.

Educational Factor

More governors and teachers than families and students thought that homework improved grades. More families, teachers and governors at the higher achieving schools stated that homework did improved grades. Cowan and Hallam (1999) supported this and stated that homework did improve educational value as more time was spent on study, consolidating learning, extension work and developing a range of skills.

6.9 Summary

This chapter analysed and discussed the questionnaires given to students, families, teachers and governors at the six schools. Referring to the themes identified through review of the questionnaires that, firstly, the majority of respondents agreed that purpose of homework was to reinforce classwork. Teachers and governors appeared to be following the school policy and guidelines and were not necessarily giving their own opinion. Secondly, revision was identified as the preferred type of homework although this was not always given. Thirdly, families did help with homework and although they saw this as part of the role they did not always feel confident in supporting. Students were stressed by homework and felt that family activities were affected by homework. Teachers did not always take into consideration home circumstances and the resources available to students at home. Finally, Hallam's four factors affecting homework were identified in the questionnaires. The political factor was identified in the respondents knowledge of the school policy, the home-school agreement, the whole school strategy and the understanding of the management of homework through the use of the school planner and access to and attendance of the homework club. The economic factor was discussed through value and usefulness it has and how effective it was in supporting and developing the skills needed in future work. The social factor was considered in the discussion about the home environment and the understanding teachers had

of home circumstances. The educational factor related to whether homework improved grades.

Chapter 7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

Discussion in this chapter focuses on responses to the primary questions for this study:

- What is the purpose of homework?
- What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?
- Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?
- What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

The findings are discussed across the various documents that have been scrutinised, including the student planner, school policy and home-school agreement, as well as from the questionnaire and interview data. These responses are compared with themes found in the literature.

The implications of the findings of the current study, that is, what do they mean and what do they imply, are then discussed. In particular the implications for schools' expectations of what homework might or will achieve in the current national context where the setting of homework seems to have no basis in law will be considered.

7.2 Discussion in relation to the four key questions

7.2.1 What is the purpose of homework?

Introduction

Given the apparent importance attributed to homework in the schools' public statements it would seem that students, families, teachers and governors would all have a clear idea about the purpose of it. In the current context where schools, since the 1988 Education Act, have been increasingly in competition with each other, it is essential that the school maintains a clear public focus on learning and achievement. Schools in close proximity, and with similar catchment areas, to each other could be undersubscribed or oversubscribed and are attempting to attract the same families and students. Although all groups agreed that homework improved grades, it was a valuable aid to learning and that homework helped to understand classwork, the situation was not as simple as it appeared. There were differences between the groups and between the schools which reflected the socio-economic backgrounds.

The publically expressed view

In the current study there is very close agreement, in the documents that are open to public scrutiny, between homework policies, home-school agreements and planner documents about the various purposes of homework. The homework policy, home-school agreement and planner documents from the schools in the current study all gave very similar reasons for setting homework which included developing organisational, study and independent learning skills, to reinforce work carried out in class and to prepare for future classwork. Homework was also set to develop research skills for future study. Similarly, in previous research, MacBeath and Turner (1990), describing the reasons why homework is set, argued that homework reinforced learning and encouraged good habits, self-discipline, planning, students taking responsibility for their own learning and preparation for future

learning and research skills. Hallam (2006) agreed with this view, stating that advantages of setting homework included prompting academic learning.

Public perception of schools and promotion of home-school communication has long been seen as one important purpose of homework (Hallam, 2006). The documents in the current study also stated that homework was the link between school and home. This was supported by MacBeath and Turner (1990) who stated that homework was the link between school and home and was a form of communication with parents so that they supported their children and understood what was taking place in the classroom. The interviews in the current study concur with Macbeath and Turner's views that homework was set as it was expected by parents, students, teachers and the public. Weston (1999) also stated that a key purpose to homework was to improve links between home and school. As is discussed below, however, there may be a big difference between perceptions of what families want and what policy makers in schools think families want and/or expect.

Views of the value of homework

In the current study proportionately more teachers and governors took the official view that homework was so important to students' learning and achievement that it should be set, compared with families and students. There is an important question here about the extent to which schools can encourage and require homework to be completed if families did not support the setting of it. These families would have been expected to sign a home-school agreement stating that they would support it, yet schools have no legal power to enforce homework as a result of the signing of such an agreement. The significance of this cannot be overstated, this means that the schools in this study were highly dependent on work being completed at home, that the students had the resources and the families were supportive in providing space, facilities, resources and time. Interestingly, proportionately more

families, teachers and governors at the higher achieving schools stated that homework should be set compared with the lower achieving schools, implying that these families were more supportive of schools' policies than in the lower achieving schools.

In seeming contradiction to responses from students and families who thought that homework should not be set, all respondents in the current study stated that they thought homework did improve grades, although proportionately more teachers and governors were in agreement compared with students and families. The more positive responses for both questions came from the higher achieving schools, however. This may reflect the official policy statements in some documents that homework was set to improve academic standards. Interestingly the literature is ambivalent about this issue. Sharpe *et al* (2001) found that there was very little evidence to show that homework improved grades, but the OECD (2015) stated that students who spent more time completing homework were more likely to achieve higher grades in mathematics, reading and science. Hallam (2006) supported this and stated that lower ability students who undertake regular homework can achieve higher grades than those higher ability students who do not do any homework.

Although all respondents in the current study stated that they thought homework was a valuable aid to learning, as can be seen above, proportionately more teachers and governors were in agreement with this compared with students and families. More higher achieving schools saw homework as a more valuable aid to learning compared with the lower achieving schools. The MacBeath and Turner (1990) research found that families and teachers were in agreement that homework was a valuable aid to learning, and that students found it valuable when it was well explained, they had time to do it

and it was differentiated. Hughes and Greenhough (2002) also found that some students did not gain much from their homework.

Disadvantages of homework

The seeming contradiction in responses from the various participant groups in the current study about whether homework should be set, whether it was a valuable aid to learning and improved grades may well relate to some of the disadvantages of the setting of homework, whom these disadvantages affected and in which location. These could include negative attitudes of students, negative impact on families and negative impact on society (Appendix 11). The current study found, for example, that teachers, families and students all agreed that homework caused stress but it was the student respondents who gave the highest percentage of positive responses. Teachers did not see a difference between boys and girls showing signs of homework causing stress. Previous research, for example Rogers and Hallam (2006), found that one reason for girls completing more homework than boys was that they were more anxious over it and boys were less concerned about completing it if they did not see the need for it. The OECD (2015) report stated that both boys and girls were more anxious about mathematics homework tasks than other subjects, with girls showing more anxiety than boys. This supported the findings of the current study where students stated that they found mathematics the most difficult in which to complete homework. The highest percentage of students in the current study stating that homework caused stress came from the highest achieving school indicating that there was possibly more pressure being placed on them to achieve higher grades. Proportionately more teachers from these schools supported the findings that homework caused their students stress. Schools compete with each other and are judged on league tables and student grades. Schools are inspected by Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) who will look at those results and what progress students have made and

make judgements about the school, therefore adding to the pressure placed by schools on teachers, families and students. Other disadvantages are included in the responses to question 3 about the home environment.

Homework to ensure curriculum coverage

There was a very strong suggestion in the data that homework was necessary to enable teachers to ensure that the students had covered everything required in the curriculum. Previously Weston (1999) also stated that many teachers used homework to finish off classwork and not only found this acceptable but also necessary to meet the demand of the curriculum. One school in the current study explicitly stated that homework was set in order to cover the curriculum. This finding reflects previous research by Ofsted (1995:11) that found that schools suggested homework was set to extend lesson time to enable the National Curriculum to be covered, a research outcome also supported by the investigation carried out by Hughes and Greenhough (2002). Hallam (2006) also noted that homework benefits schools through increasing curriculum time. The questionnaire respondent groups in the current study were in agreement that homework was set to "reinforce the work covered in class". It is interesting that, in the current study, proportionately more students who had the experience of what homework entailed, as well as their families, stated that homework was set to finish classwork compared with teachers and governors. A number of points arise from this.

- Firstly, there is an implication that the curriculum is too crowded if work has to be completed at home. Above there is discussion of the amount of stress that all the participants in the study perceive homework creates.

- Secondly, the students can only complete the work satisfactorily if they have understood it in class which implies that the materials and/or the homework activities should be differentiated to relate to the attainment; levels of the students, but, as will be discussed later, this was not always the case. This view has been supported by others' research, for example Hattie (2009) who stated that for some students homework only reinforced what they did not understand in class and that they were therefore de-motivated.
- Thirdly, if homework is essential to curriculum coverage, then those students who do not complete it will be disadvantaged in comparison with those who do. Schools where there is less homework set to complete curriculum coverage and where there is less support from families may well do less well on league tables of student performance.
- Fourthly, in the current study teachers, students and families thought that homework helped to understand classwork, however, there were proportionately more teachers giving positive responses compared with students and families. This may mean that the homework may not have been differentiated. Again, the majority of positive responses came from the higher achieving schools.
- Fifthly, there is an important question here of differentiation in general terms. Classwork may well need to be differentiated for some students. If students did not understand the work in class they may also have difficulty in understanding it for homework. In previous research, the Hughes and Greenhough (2002) study found that some students did not understand the learning objective for their homework and they had misunderstandings over their homework and teachers did not pick this up in their feedback. They also stated that although a student

completed a task it did not mean they understood it. Ofsted (1995) found that many students were able to complete their homework when it was explained to them but often setting homework was left until the end of the lesson when there was insufficient time for it to be explained in any great detail. Although teachers, in the current study, stated that they planned for homework on the lesson plans, either "always" or "sometimes", this may have been left until the end of the lesson to explain and may have been restrained by time.

Homework sanctions and punishment

A proportionately small number of students, families and one unqualified teacher stated that it was set as a punishment. The highest percentage of student respondents stating that homework was set as a punishment were from the only school where families also stated this reason and the same school where the only teacher also gave this as a reason. In previous research, when Sharpe *et al* (2001) cited the "ten Ps" described by Epstein (1998) punishment was one of the reasons for setting homework.

Hallam (2006) stated that teachers found it difficult at times to motivate the students to complete homework and sanctions had to be imposed. However, it could be asked why they were not motivated, whether it was due to the subject, type of task or their lack of understanding of the work or the activity. This study did not ask the students why they did not complete their homework therefore information is not available. Information about sanctions for not completing homework was shared on the school websites and in key documents. Therefore all involved knew what was expected and what the consequences were.

Proportionately more teachers, governors and families thought sanctions worked compared with students, very few of whom thought sanctions for non-

completion of homework were effective. There was no difference between schools. Although the majority of students did not think homework should be set the majority completed their work. Sanctions varied between schools and in the case of one of the higher achieving schools there were no sanctions for not completing homework. According to the interviews conducted in the current study most schools operated a staged approach to sanctions, with students given another chance and parents contacted before detention took place. The detentions were sometimes organised by subject, department or by the whole school. However, the questionnaires showed that detention was the first sanction to be used, although teachers thought that informing parents was the most effective. Students were not asked this question so a comparison of responses with teachers is not able to be made.

In previous work, MacBeath and Turner (1990) found that although they were divided in their opinion over sanctions for non-completion of homework most teachers were in favour of them. Teachers were also asked what sanctions they used and most would give extra work, given another chance to complete it or they informed parents. Very few would give a detention. In the study undertaken by Weston (1999) there was a sliding scale of sanctions for repeat offences. The study also found that sanctions should be consistent and clear to all and that the reasons why homework was not completed should be investigated before a sanction was given. Ofsted (1995) stated that sanctions investigated in their study took the form of warnings and that homework could be completed in school at lunch time or after school in the form of a detention and that it was for persistent offenders rather than those who occasionally did not complete their homework. Whatever a school policy might state in relation to sanctions for non-completion of homework, as in the current study nowhere is there any statement about taking home circumstances into consideration when sanctions are applied.

The importance of feedback on homework

In further support of statements in school policies about the purpose and importance of homework, these policies in the current study included statements about teachers giving feedback which should be constructive. In response to this, students should read the feedback and act upon it. This issue is not new. In previous work the majority of schools visited by Weston (1999) issued guidelines to the teachers on marking and giving feedback. That study found that policies set time limits for marking and for the return of homework and that teachers spent time during lessons going over homework. When students and teachers in the current study were questioned about when feedback was given there was a discrepancy in the length of time, with teachers stating that feedback was given within a week, while students gave a longer length of time and in some cases stating that no feedback was given. This issue of the length of time between submission of work and feedback, or else no feedback being given has potentially damaging effects on students' learning when considering previous research findings. For example, MacBeath and Turner (1990) suggested that teachers establish a pattern and routine of setting, collecting marking and giving feedback on homework and that the feedback should be given as soon as possible after homework had been completed with good work being recognised. They also stated that as short a time as was possible should be between the homework handed in and feedback given. The majority of teachers involved in the MacBeath and Turner study stated that homework was only useful when teachers gave feedback and the majority of students felt that it was useful to receive comments from their teachers, although a quarter of the students stated that no one looked at their work.

These conclusions have a particular salience to the current study, especially given the context of competition in which they were operating. The majority of feedback on homework seen by Hughes and Greenhough (2002) was

summative and not formative. The homework was marked, corrected, graded, and in some cases given a comment based on how well the homework was completed, rather than what could be improved. When formative feedback was given the students reacted more positively towards it. Students also appreciated when feedback was given in class as a follow up to the homework and saw this as a valuable practice. Weston (1999) found that good practice was when students were given regular feedback, it was prompt and included advice on how to improve. Both parents and students were concerned that they had feedback on work completed so that they understood if the work was correct and where improvements could be made. In the current study, one of the concerns that might be investigated further, is whether and how teachers might provide students with the kind of feedback that could maintain their interest and motivation to complete homework and see its worth in terms of supporting their learning.

The importance of record keeping

In terms of supporting the system for setting homework and recording whether or not this was happening, most participants across all schools agreed that homework was recorded in a planner. However, there appeared to be some ambivalence, particularly in students' responses, about whether such planners were used as the official policy stated they should be used. Once again there seemed to be a gap between stated public policy and reported experience of that policy in action. Again, this finding is not new. The majority of teachers in the current study stated that the monitoring of homework was undertaken by the head of department who checked that homework was set and feedback was given. The MacBeath and Turner (1990) study, for example, stated that there appeared to be little consistency across schools, indicating that the setting of homework was not being monitored, either across subjects or across departments.

Availability of support at school for homework completion

The importance placed on homework may be seen in part as reflected in the provision of facilities on site for homework completion. All the schools in the current study offered a homework club and the questionnaires showed that the majority of students, teachers and governors agreed that there was a homework club. However, a number of problems were reported in relation to their use.

The majority of teachers stated that the homework timetable did not match subject specific homework clubs meaning that too little thought had been given to the times when students needed this kind of support the most.

Very few students attended homework clubs. The interviews indicated that some students did not want to attend a homework club due to peer pressure or that they needed transport home. This reflected the findings of Ofsted (1995) that there was a problem with after school support as some staff were unavailable and students needed transport home.

The current study found that many homework clubs were supported by non-teaching staff, but in a few cases, teaching staff attended either whole school organised homework clubs to support their own subject or department organised sessions. Again, this finding reflects Ofsted (1995) that support took place in different ways with some schools having an organised homework club or teaching staff giving up their break or lunch time to support students.

Overview of implications of question 1 responses

Important reasons have been stated for setting homework from all groups, including, to reinforce, consolidate, prepare and extend learning. However it is highly significant there are differences between those in schools who

support the public discourse and other groups who state that it should not be set. School documents outlined that homework was set to support students in developing independent learning skills, including organisational, study and research skills in preparation for future study and work skills. However, in some important ways, reports, particularly those of the students and their families, of the reality of undertaking the homework differ from those of the school policy makers and those who set the homework. There were important differences also between responses from families, teachers and governors at the higher achieving schools in comparison with the rest about whether homework should be set, improved grades and was a valuable aid for learning.

Really important are issues of:

- whether public perceptions of a school would be damaged if it discontinued setting homework;
- whether homework really is needed to ensure curriculum coverage, or whether this could be done another way;
- whether other advantages attributed to homework could be achieved in a different way;
- whether and how teachers are able to set homework that is meaningful to students, is differentiated, and formative feedback given in a timely manner;
- the degree of stress caused by homework, in particular with students in the higher achieving schools finding homework more stressful than other students;
- how schools can encourage or persuade families that their children should complete homework when the majority of them do not feel it should be set. (This issue is discussed later in the responses to question 3 below).

7.2.2 What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?

Introduction

School documents including the homework policy, the home-school agreement and the planner all outlined homework expectations including the type of homework the students could expect. Although schools suggested that homework tasks should be achievable, suitable for the subject, age range and ability of the students, and should take into account the resources and support required to complete the work, this was not always happening when teachers actually set homework.

The discussion below should be viewed in light of the most common response to the question above which is that when students in the current study were asked "What sort of homework is set?" the majority stated "Finishing off classwork".

Types of homework set

It is noteworthy in the current study that "Coursework" was set as homework by a number of subjects. However, more and more examination boards are setting controlled assessment including some of the subjects (English, art, business studies, drama, design, humanities, ICT, languages, music and science) studied at the schools involved in the study, therefore homework could only be preparation for the controlled assessment rather than the coursework itself. English and humanities were subjects that needed more of the work to be written and this did take time and therefore this could be a reason for the classwork to be finished at home. It may be that the term 'coursework' in the questionnaire was misleading in that respondents may have misinterpreted this as preparation for controlled assessment. Whatever the situation, it is nevertheless the case that this type of homework is essential for students' success in GCSE examinations. Those who do not

complete it, for any reason, will clearly be at a disadvantage. In so-called 'controlled conditions', for example, students are often encouraged to take prepared materials into the examination room with them.

All three groups in the current study, students, teachers and governors, all agreed that "revision" was the most effective type of homework. However, revising the work undertaken in class can be an effective type of homework only as long as the students understand the work in the first place, as noted in the responses to question 1 above, so the question could be asked whether this is testing the ability to retain information and/or to understand the work in order to apply it on another occasion, and whether the revision is leading to end of unit tests or national examination board examinations. All three groups rated "finishing off classwork" as the least effective type of homework and yet as discussed earlier this was the main type of homework set in most subjects. As Weston (1999) found, the most effective type of homework is that which is an integral part of the whole curriculum. If there was not enough time in their lessons to cover everything, perhaps a more effective homework such as preparation for classwork might be set, as in the concept of "flipped learning". It has to be said, however, that in order to participate in "flipped learning" there is an assumption that students have access to resources at home as well as the motivation to complete the work.

The majority of students in the current study preferred to be set "revision" or "finishing off classwork" as homework, and, as stated above, "revision" was perceived as the most effective type of homework whereas "finishing off classwork" was regarded as least effective type of homework. As "finishing off classwork" was the main type of homework set this may be one reason why these students did not consider homework should be set, because, in their view, the homework that was set was not meaningful in terms of its effectiveness. Another reason could be, as Hughes and Greenhough (2002)

found, some homework tasks were more problematic than others, in particular revision. In their study this was largely to the result of revision skills not being taught.

Motivational aspects of homework

According to the school documents in this current study, the types of homework set differed between schools and between subjects. This ranged between longer projects to short tasks to consolidate learning. The majority of students found coursework or projects the most difficult to complete as homework. Previous research has highlighted the importance of this point. For example, the Hughes and Greenhough (2002) study found that there was an increase in enthusiasm in particular subjects in some students due to the meaningful nature of the homework that was given, and where students were motivated to complete their work most parents were in favour of homework and saw it as having two purposes, as an extension of schools work and as developing study and independent skills.

It was the majority of students from the highest achieving school who stated that they found projects the most difficult type of homework compared with the other schools. This finding is in contrast to Ofsted (1995) who found that many higher ability students enjoyed the open ended tasks while lower achievers preferred the practical work. Although 'higher ability' students cannot be assumed to be those in 'higher achieving' schools, nevertheless the fact that those students in the higher achieving schools reported the highest levels of stress may be associated with the pressure they felt themselves under to achieve well.

Importance of awareness of individual student needs

The board of governors in a maintained school has a particular responsibility for the school curriculum, so it is particularly problematic that, in the current

study, most governors responded that teachers should not take into account home circumstances when setting homework. This possibly indicates that governors do not have the understanding of the home environment that is required to make a reasoned judgment about homework policy. The majority of teachers at all schools, however, stated that they were aware of which of their students had difficulty completing homework and that they did make allowances for them in the form of more support in school, more time or extra resources. These findings resonate with Weston (1999) who reported that some teachers were aware of some difficulties the students had in completing their homework and these could include an area to work at home, no adults at home, child-minding, shopping and acting as interpreters for other family members. Hughes (2001) also stated that although teachers were aware that many students would not have the environment or resources to achieve this they felt under pressure in setting it and in following school policy.

Differentiation is obviously an important topic as it relates to the kind of homework that is set, and the attainment level of the students. According to Weston (1999) differentiated homework was not commonly seen however when it was, it was differentiated by outcome rather than by task and assessed accordingly. The Weston (1999) study also found that in most schools homework was not included in schemes or units of work as schools see it as part of the teacher's duty to set appropriate tasks for their class, when it was planned and it varied between subjects. Sharpe *et al* (2001) stated that sometimes there was little differentiated homework by task or outcome as teachers did not always know what to set. Many students who received differentiated homework sometimes saw this as a stigma. In the current study the documents suggested that schools sometimes differentiated by setting projects or open style work and students could decide how they wished to work and complete the task but this was often decided by the subject teacher or department rather than school policy. The interviews

supported this; when teachers were asked in the questionnaires if they set differentiated homework the majority set differentiated work by task or the resources needed to complete the work.

Time requirement

In relation to the time required for homework completion, Weston (1999) found that although the guidelines set down in 1998 for year 10 students was between ninety and 150 minutes each day the actual figures in the study were between 105 and 135 minutes of homework set each day. In the current study the majority of students and families stated that between thirty and sixty minutes was set each night. However the majority of students from the lowest achieving school said that they did not receive any homework and this was confirmed by their families who stated they either received no homework or less than thirty minutes each night. This was the same school that stated that homework equated to three extra weeks of study. Higgins *et al* (2014) reflected this view by stating that, on average, five extra months of additional progress could be made in a secondary school if homework was effective.

As stated above, the current study found that both families and students stated that on average they were set between thirty and ninety minutes each night. Both groups thought that this was about the right amount of homework to be set. However, the majority of students from the two highest achieving schools thought that they received "too much" homework. Students from those two schools were also the ones who stated that they found homework stressful. Although they found homework stressful, their teachers said that homework was either always or usually completed.

Overview of responses to question 2

Revision was seen by all respondents as the most effective type of homework and this was also stated as the preferred type of homework and yet teachers were not setting this. The literature discussed above found that effective homework was integrated into the curriculum and not a separate piece of work.

The least effective type was identified as finishing off classwork and yet this was the main type of homework set by teachers and students stated that it was one of the more preferred types of homework. As discussed above if there was not enough time in the timetabled class session to complete the work it might be that an alternative might be considered such as preparation for class work or "flipped learning". However as with setting other types of homework consideration must be placed on what resources are needed and what access the students have to these resources.

The majority of teachers stated that they planned for homework, but setting a finishing off activity as homework might be seen as a contradiction here, as this possibly indicated that they did not have time in the lesson to complete the work planned. Teachers did not appear to take into consideration the type of work preferred by their students, but motivating them to complete it is clearly important. If they set preferred types of work it might be that some reluctant students would be more inclined and/or able to complete it, increase their knowledge and understanding and improve grades.

7.2.3 Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?

Introduction

The issue of the environment in which students completed their homework is clearly very important in relation to the question of equity and fairness. School documents and interviews showed that families were expected to support students undertaking homework at home and in some cases it was expected that this should be a joint activity. If this was happening, there is a question of whose work the school was assessing, the student's or the family's. It follows from this that there was also a question if the work was not completed, of who should be given the sanction, the student or the family?. From the data it appeared that schools were not always taking home circumstances into consideration when setting homework. Sometimes they were not aware of who was at home to help the students, what resources were available and whether the students had the time and space in which to work.

Effect on family life

In the current study the majority of families stated that homework negatively affected their family activities, with examples of no time for family activities, including taking part in family events. These findings were similar to MacBeath and Turner (1990) who found that where and when homework was completed was at times influenced by family life. Some families were also concerned that the students did not interact with the rest of the family and there was less conversation as they were in their bedroom completing the work often late into the evening and at weekends. Proportionately more students in the higher achieving schools expressed this view. It may be that the negative views of students reflect the findings of Weston (1999) that some students were involved in a number of after school activities including sport

and music which took up time that could be used for homework. When asked about their attitude towards homework a quarter of the students responded that they found that homework got in the way, however they did not state what it got in the way of (Weston, *ibid.*).

Resources available at home

In the current study, despite the differences between the affluence of the areas in which the schools were located, most students completed their homework at home with most of these students working in their bedrooms between 3pm and 9pm. This finding has been replicated a number of times, for example Hughes and Greenhough (2002), MacBeath and Turner (1990) and Weston (1999). Nevertheless, proportionately more students from the highest achieving schools stated that they worked in their bedrooms. There is an issue here, again, of the terms of the home-school agreement in relation to what families were expected to do. Families had signed these agreements included in which were statements that they would support the completion of homework by their children. Pragmatically, unless those children asked their family members either to assist them with their homework or else to check it, it is not possible to see how families would in fact know what the young person had to do and thus be able to ensure that the work was completed.

Reporting on research carried out by BETT Copping (2014) noted that in one in six families it was not the students who completed their own homework but other members of the family. In the current study most families stated that they had time to help their child, apart from families in the two lower achieving schools who either "sometimes" or "never" had time to help with homework. Families in lower achieving schools gave less support than families from higher achieving schools and yet those student possibly required more support. The current study found that the majority of students stated that they needed help at home and both students and families agreed that help was

given at home. In most homes it was the mother or father who helped with homework, reflecting the DCSF (2008b) report that mothers were more likely than fathers to give support. Some schools actively encouraged families helping and families felt that they should be expected to do so. However, if collaboration was encouraged, a further issue of equity arises here for students who either have no support available from their parents, or have no support available when they need it.

Hughes and Greenhough (2002) stated that the amount of support given differed between parents of high achieving students and not so high achieving students and this was due to the lack of confidence in their ability to provide support. Parents suggested that teachers should also explain to parents what was expected so that they could give some support. This was supported in the current study by families who when asked what additional help the school could offer responded that subject specific information, information booklets and online information would be welcomed. The OECD (2015:160) confirmed this and suggested that schools and teachers should "offer to help parents motivate their children to do their homework and provide facilities so that disadvantaged students have a quiet place to complete assigned homework if none is available in their homes" as a way of encouraging disadvantaged or struggling students to complete their homework. In the research undertaken into the home environment the Sharpe *et al* review found that the amount of time spent and the type of support given by parents depended on their cultural and socio-economic background.

The documents in the current study indicated that resources were expected to be provided at home and these would possibly be the type of resources students could not access at school in order to broaden their experience. The staff interviewed stated that many homework tasks required computer or

internet access as homework may be set on the school website or required information from the internet. When questioned teaching staff were not always aware if their students had computer or internet access even though the homework set required this resource. Families with only one computer expressed concern that the computer was required for homework tasks and if more than one child was set homework then it caused a problem at home. Schools suggested that teachers should set homework tasks that were achievable, suitable for the subject, age range and ability of the students and should take into account the resources and support required to complete the work. However it can be seen from the evidence in the documentation and interviews that this did not happen consistently across all schools. This finding is not new, and schools should be aware of the issue of resources to complete homework, given that previous research, for example Ofsted (1995), has already found that some teachers had difficulty in setting some homework tasks as there were limited resources available at home, therefore many set homework tasks on worksheets rather than text books.

Overview

Two important issues arising in the responses to this question relate to, firstly, the effect of homework on family life and, therefore, possible reasons for the negative view of homework by both students and families, and, secondly, issues of equity in relation to the availability of resources at home, both physical and human.

Most students and families agreed that homework adversely affected family activities due to the time involved in completing it. There is clearly a balance to be achieved here in how much time is reasonable for homework, and how much might be reserved for interactions with the family, including involvement in important family events. More students from higher achieving schools thought it affected family life which could be owing to the amount of

homework they were completing or that these families were involved in more activities.

Families did not always feel confident in their own ability to help their children, although most students reported that they were reliant on this to some degree. Although families commented that they would welcome information, support and guidance from schools, this was not always forthcoming, adding to the discomfort of some family members.

There is a clear issue of equity when the homework that was set required specific resources that were not available in some homes.

At least half the homework referred to in the current study needed computer and in some cases, internet access. There was an assumption here, not always well substantiated or grounded in reality, that the student had access to those resources, and if they did, that this access was at a time suitable to complete the work.

7.2.4 What political, economic, social and educational factors identified by Hallam (2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

Introduction

Although Hallam (2004) listed the four factors affecting homework as political, economic, social and education she did not elaborate on these and what their implication were.

In the current research the political factors are understood as factors in the national context, local context and within the schools acting as facilitators, constraints or pressures on policy relating to homework. Schools have a public image to maintain and can be scrutinised by the national bodies of

Ofsted and examination boards and locally by governors, parents and the local community.

The economic factors related to the school documents which appeared to show that schools were preparing students for future study or future work. Those economic factors also related to the resources available at school, both in the teacher support and availability and access to equipment, books and computers.

The social factors can be seen as the home environment and the pressure families are under to support and provide resources, the willingness and ability to support both financially and through time. Homework can also be seen as having an impact of local society due to the time restraints students and families are under

Educational factors can be seen as meeting the demands of the curriculum, including classwork, homework and assessment.

Political factors

In terms of political factors that form part of the context in which schools' homework policies and practice develop and are maintained, some of the most important relate to the marketization of education following the 1988 Education Reform Act with its implications for the public face of the school as reflected through the content of the policy documents; home-school agreements; homework clubs and issues of equity; and the status and responsibilities of governors for curriculum issues in schools, including the formulation of homework policy.

Since the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act and the marketization of education, schools have been operating in a climate of

accountability, competition, inspection and parental choice of school for their offspring. The government needs league tables and demonstrable improved achievement by students in state-funded schools to evidence the success of its own policies in education within a five-year term of office (reported personal conversation with Lord Adonis, Wearmouth unpublished). Among the six schools in this study, higher achieving schools appear to be increasingly oversubscribed while the lower achieving are undersubscribed, also often reflecting the affluence of the catchment areas. This is not a new phenomenon. Paton (2013, online) for example, writing in *The Telegraph*, reported that in some high achieving schools there were eighteen students competing for each place.

What might be called the 'public face' of schools is clearly very important in this context and at this moment in time. This includes what the school publishes in relation to its policies. In addition; legal requirements to publish policy documents related to learning have been imposed on schools as a framework against which the quality of what they offer can be judged by outsiders. All in all, therefore, the policy documents published by the six schools have to be written for an audience which includes families looking for the 'best' school for their child and Ofsted.

Hallam (2006) explained that homework could promote communication with families and improve the reputation of the school. The policy documents in the current study outlined what was expected from homework and stated why homework was set, the type of work set, the support needed from school and home and in some cases also stated what the sanctions would be set for not completing homework. When interviewed, the staff described the policy and indicated that in some cases it was embedded in another learning policy. The questionnaires showed that teachers and governors knew there was a policy but the majority of students and families were unaware of the policy.

Since 1992 schools have also been subject to inspections by Ofsted. The current inspection framework includes reference to evidence of students' attainment across time; the frequency of inspections appears to depend, at least in part, on the extent to which, in secondary schools, achievement levels in external examinations are maintained and/or improved (Ofsted, 2015b). In schools where homework is seen as helping students to improve their grades it is obvious that there will be considerable pressure to complete homework tasks, as is clearly evident in the highest achieving school in the current study. The consequent negative effect on levels of students' stress and damage to family life when there is an imbalance in school-home life balance may also be associated with this kind of pressure to do well.

When the guidelines for homework were introduced in 1998, schools were only encouraged to have a homework policy. No statutory policy was put in place.

According to the DfE (2014d), it is not a statutory requirement to have a homework policy, perhaps because what a student does at home cannot be legally enforceable by schools (DfE, 2013). Neither is it statutory to have a policy related to learning. However, all the schools had a policy that included reference to homework. Each school made reference to homework in either a standalone policy or in another curriculum related policy. Schools therefore find themselves in a considerable dilemma here. Homework is viewed officially as a 'good thing' per se, but students' activities at home cannot be regulated by law. This means that schools are heavily dependent on the goodwill of families to support their homework policies.

It is interesting that, although legally they did not have to have a homework policy, the schools in this study had a policy relating to homework, however,

they did not always communicate this to families, or involve families in developing it. It seems therefore that this policy might be more rhetoric than practice. Unsurprisingly the analysis of the questionnaires showed that teachers and governors responded to questions about policy by giving the official school guidelines and stated what was expected of them as might be anticipated, and it was only when teachers were asked for a view, did they actually answer questions with their own opinion and professional judgement rather than following school policy.

The issue of home-school agreements is an interesting one. When they were introduced in 1998, under the School Standards and Framework Act, they were set up to promote partnerships between schools and parents through better communication, and in doing so, support the students more effectively. Since then there has been a statutory requirement to have a home-school agreement document in place at every maintained state school, academy and free school.

All six schools, as required, had a home-school agreement in place and students, parents and a representative of the school signed it. However it cannot be legally enforced and whatever they are signing and agreeing to cannot be imposed. So although the schools were fulfilling the government requirement to have a home-school agreement there is no legal requirement for any party to adhere to the agreement.

Although schools, families and students were expected to sign it, a large number of families and students were unaware of the agreement. The Department for Education (2013) stated that it was the responsibility of governing bodies to ensure that all parents understood, accepted and signed the home-school agreement. It also stated that if students understood the document they could also sign. Ouston and Hood (2000) explained that

students benefited when there were close working relationships between school and home. They also suggested that good practice in writing the agreement was to include the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all parties and that it could be clearly and easily read and understood by families and students. Most teachers and governors knew that there was a home-school agreement and homework policy compared with students and families.

All schools offered a homework club as suggested following the Department for Education and Employment 1998 guidelines on homework, and in response to concerns about equity for some students. However they were not well attended or even known to some respondents. If the homework clubs are not well attended are schools questioning this and looking at alternative arrangements? If the homework club is set up to support students with the resources needed to complete the work but may not necessarily have at home and the students are not attending the club, perhaps the schools should encourage the teachers to set alternative types of homework.

In these schools, many governors were not from an educational background and may not have had the same understanding of education and the implications of homework. According to the *Governance Handbook* (DfE, 2017:4), governing bodies are "vision setters and the strategic decision makers for their schools" but nowhere in the document does it state that governors must have an understanding of educational matters, only that they need to improve the outcomes of students. Neither does the document make reference to homework and the only reference in DfE (2013) is that it is a suggested topic. Again, no guidance is given to governors by government agencies on homework. Given the strategic importance of the governing board in schools' decision about the curriculum this may, perhaps, seem surprising. However, given the non-statutory status of homework a question might be asked about guidance that might be given in a public document,

when homework is officially viewed as beneficial to students' learning but it has not basis in that is legally enforceable.

Economic Factors

Economic factors most specifically relate to an assumption that homework is supportive of improved achievement and study skills and therefore, has the potential to contribute to enhanced future life and work opportunities. The school documents and interviews tended to assume that completion of homework was related to improved grades and, by implication, enhanced life and work chances. Examination results are reported on by schools and many will judge a school on these outcomes. These include current and future students and parents and future employers of the students. Publication of the homework policy therefore appears to imply that the schools were committed to supporting the students in developing study skills for school work, future study and the work place.

There was a difference, however, in the responses between schools in the different catchments areas with regards to the value of homework, with proportionately more respondents in the higher achieving schools stating that there was a value to homework, compared with the lower achieving schools. If homework does in fact improve grades there is an issue here as to why the lower achieving schools were not setting homework to support student progress. There could be an issue regarding the perceptions of school, education and homework by students, families or teachers, although, as stated above by Hallam (2006), regular homework undertaken by lower achieving students could result in higher grades than more able students who did not complete any homework provided that this homework is meaningful and adequately differentiated. It may be that students and families in the lower achieving schools have less confidence in good examination grades supporting future work prospects.

Students need to have faith in their own ability, what they could achieve and how this could influence their future life choices. Teachers need to expect their students to be able to achieve and work with them in finding ways to reach potential grades and goals. The negative attitude towards school by some families could be caused by their own experience of school and this could therefore be influencing their support of their children. The work for these students must be sufficiently motivating for students to be willing to work and achieve. The work should be manageable at home with appropriate resources, space and time. Schools need to work with families in how they can be supported in helping their children, not necessarily through resources but through motivation and emotional support.

Social factors

Factors associated with social aspects include those related to family life, and those related to peer pressure, the attractions of alternative forms of entertainment outside school, and so on.

There is a disconnection between rhetoric around the importance of the family and the setting of homework. David Cameron, Prime Minister at the time, spoke of the importance of family life and how the government will strengthen and support family life and families reported that homework affected family activities. (Prime Minister's Office, 2014)

Homework affected family life and caused students stress in the higher achieving schools more than in the lower achieving schools. As Hallam (2004) previously explained, pressure could be caused by homework in family and social relationships and activities. Teachers in the current study stated they realised that homework caused stress, but, even so, still set it and students reported that were stressed as a result. Given this finding, it seems

reasonable that the issue of stress might be discussed at a high level in these schools, for example by senior management and in meetings of the governing board. Teacher awareness should lead to setting more appropriate homework and reduce that stress in the first instance.

Vincent and Tomlinson (1997) reported that although schools welcomed a positive relationship with families in supporting the education of their children they wanted to keep control of family involvement. They made reference to a Labour government plan to introduce parenting classes in order to control families and family life.

Research undertaken by Galloway *et al* (2013) investigated the non-academic affects of homework on students in high performing schools in the United States. They agreed with the findings of Sallee and Rigler in 2008 that homework should not be given as a matter of routine but that it should be set with a purpose and benefit and to develop the student. Many students reported that homework caused stress and affected family life and leisure activities. They found that students spent more time alone and not interacting with families or communities.

In this research families supported their children when they were asked to but would have liked more guidance from schools. With so many changes in the curriculum since some members of the family were at school they were likely to question their own ability. Work patterns of family members may be such that they may not be able to help with homework when that help is needed. Schools need to be more aware of home circumstances and make allowances for this, including supporting those supporting students.

In terms of peer pressure and attractions outside school that reduce the amount of time available for homework, these six schools are located in an

urban area with a wide range of amenities and facilities: cinemas, theatres, sporting venues, nationally successful sports teams. There is a very efficient transport system that enables easy movement across the whole area and nationally by young people. These pressures and alternative attractions may compete for a student's time outside school and explain, at least in part, why the vast majority of students are not in favour of the setting of homework.

Educational factors

Educational factors link very closely with factors relating to economics: the assumption that improved grades will result from the completion of homework, and that improved grades will result in enhanced job prospect, and also with the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Schools offer students and families support in completing homework through homework clubs, online support and documents outlining expectations and guidance, although families would welcome more guidance. As Cowan and Hallam (1999) suggested, and as is reflected in the official view of homework in the current study, homework may be seen as a valuable aid to learning and developing a range of skills. However, as discussed above, there is only an educational value to homework if the student understands the work in class and can then extend the work at home. In this respect it is noteworthy that homework was not differentiated by all teachers in all subjects, neither was it differentiated by the task set or by how the students completed the task. Sanctions were rarely seen by students as effective and there was inconsistency between what the school documents stated and what actually happened. Once again, there is a clear case here for, first of all, ensuring that the homework given is effective in supporting learning, which itself implies that the school is aware of what type of work this may be. In no schools was there any evidence that there had been any kind of evaluation of this.

Homework should be marked and feedback given in line with school policy and it should be monitored. There has long been an understanding of the importance of formative feedback in supporting students' learning (Black & Wiliam,1998), but as can be seen from the documents, interviews and questionnaires this was not always the case.

Schools have to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and the assessment of the students, and in managing this they put pressure on all involved, including, students, families and teachers. Schools must take into account how they manage homework to support all groups.

As stated above, if homework does improve grades the issue is why it is not being used more effectively, if the views of the students particularly can be trusted. It may be that there is a lack of understanding of the value of homework by teachers and schools, and a lack of understanding of what is effective homework. Once all can see the effectiveness and value of homework it may be more accepted. This will also increase motivation and therefore improve grades and achievement.

7.3 A New Type of Homework?

Described by the Flipped Learning Network (2014), "flipped learning" is "school work at home and homework at school". "Flipped learning" in one form or other has been around for a number of years but it has only been in the last few years that educationalists have taken more notice of it and the benefits of it to learning. The idea behind "flipped learning" is that the teacher gives access to material, usually in the form of a video, to the students so that they can watch and learn from the lesson and, if necessary play again and repeat as many times as it necessary for them to understand what is being taught, rather than listening once in the classroom. When the students attend

school they have this knowledge and are able to apply it in the classroom setting while undertaking tasks and activities set by the teacher. This enables the teacher to work with individual students who need additional support. Material to access outside the classroom can take the form of video or books. Plunkett (2014) stated that "flipping the classroom" and offering students the resources out of class, allowed classroom work to become applied and where experimental learning activities allowed the students to achieve. This was supported by Boles *et al* (2014) who stated that there was more interaction between teacher and students in a "flipped classroom" and teachers would have more time to guide and support their students.

Bergmann and Sams (2014) explained three main benefits from this approach to learning. Relationships between teacher and student were more positive, there was a deeper content to the work and it developed the curiosity of the learner.

This is in fact homework by another name and it still has the same problems as traditional homework of access to resources, space to undertake the task and time to do it.

Chapter 8 IMPLICATIONS, EVALUATION OF STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Implications

This final chapter begins by drawing out implications of the study as a whole. In doing so it takes account both of the main research question and also of the sub-questions. There is no attempt to generalise findings from this limited sample of schools, but the findings are nevertheless relevant to the community in which the schools are located. The chapter goes on to offer a discussion of the strengths and constraints of this particular study, and the contribution to knowledge, offers an overall conclusion, and concludes with suggestions for possible further research in the area of homework.

The main question asked at the start of the study was,

- What is the purpose of homework?

Associated with this are sub-questions:

- What type of homework is seen as most effective in supporting students' learning in the various areas of the curriculum?
- Does the home environment always support students completing homework and what kind of resources do students need to complete homework and do they have access to these resources at home?
- What political, economic, social and educational factors (Hallam, 2004) are important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed?

The implications of the findings most strongly relate to the following issues:

- Consideration of school homework policy documents to ensure, as far as possible, that all the stakeholders in a school are responsible for them;
- Finding ways to address the gap between teachers' and governors' support for the setting of homework, and students' and families' opposition to it;
- An acknowledgement that whilst the four factors pertaining to the context in which homework policy and practice are developed, as identified by Hallam (2004), are very influential in maintaining current practice, nevertheless there are still important ways in which schools can address some of the concerns about the detrimental aspects of homework that are raised in the current study.

School homework policy should be developed so that all the stakeholders, students, families, teachers and governors should all be consulted and are involved in its formulation, are fully aware of what is in it and, as far as possible, support it. This is particularly important where the setting of work that is intended to be carried out outside the school setting has no basis in law. Home-School Agreements might be an attempt to secure the support of families for school policies but their terms cannot be legally enforced. In summary, In the first place, if families and students are to be expected to support a school's homework policy they should be party to its development.

A policy, broadly speaking is a set of principles and expected actions adopted by an institution in relation to a particular area (Wearmouth, 2016). School policy frameworks need to be cast within an understanding of external requirements, such as the law, the National Curriculum, and so on. They should also flow from a coherent set of beliefs and values which are shared

across an organisation (Palmer, Redfern and Smith, 1994). Policy should therefore be based on shared understanding of:

- Why the school exists: its mission;
- What it believes to be right: its values;
- What it is trying to achieve: its vision;
- What it is going to do to put this into operation: its objectives;
- Over-riding principles for action;
- Practicalities of implementation: its procedures.

In a school's homework policy, therefore, the objectives and procedures of the policy and the practices that are either implicit or stated within it should be cast within an understanding of the school's own mission and values.

In these six schools the homework policies were broadly similar to each other and also, as stated previously, reflected what can be found in the literature. However, there was a gap between teachers' and governors' knowledge of the policy documents and that of families. This is potentially very serious where homework can, potentially, add so much to the learning and achievement of young people but students' activities at home cannot be enforced by law. It is obvious that, in order to enable families to share understandings of homework policy with those officially responsible for policy development within a school, families and young people, as well as school staff should be involved. This may lead to a general sense that, as (Radford, 2000:88) suggests, such development should take place:

- Within '[...] an environment in which there are non-judgmental opportunities to reflect on one's beliefs, values, attitudes and feelings about behaviour',
- Where families, students and staff are drawn 'into active involvement, using their ideas as part of the process' and are invited 'to take responsibility for decisions taken' and provided with 'opportunities to formulate ideas that will influence future planning, including changes to practical arrangements';
- Where staff are confident enough 'to reflect on their own practice'.

The worrying gap between teachers' and governors' support for the setting of homework, but students' and families' opposition to it needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. One way to do this may be to investigate why it is that the majority of families and students are in such opposition to it and to separate out these two groups.

- It is clear from the current research that most families see their children stressed by homework, and that family activities are damaged. In some cases, too, families did not feel confident to support their children with the content of this work when their children experienced difficulties, and some families did not have the resources, for example computer and internet access, that teachers seemed to assume they would have. A further issue was that there were times when homework from different subjects was given all at the same time. Although schools had homework timetables they were not always adhered to.

In the first place it is essential that families see value in the homework that is set. This will only happen if they see their children achieving. In turn this requires attention given to meaningful work that fits what the young people are already engaged in and is manageable and achievable.

Consideration therefore needs to be given to the difficulty level of the work and adequate differentiation so that it is compatible with the attainment level of the student, and the resources required to complete particular types of homework, both human and physical. The question about space available to students has been an issue since it was reported by Crichton-Browne in *The School Guardian* in 1884 when children found it difficult to complete their work due to the overcrowding in the home and social conditions and that in some homes children had to help their parents which is still the case today with children looking after siblings while their parents are at work. Those schools taking the home environment into consideration do make allowances by making resources available during the school day or in homework clubs or by giving extra time for the work to be completed. The provision of homework clubs does not appear to be sufficient in itself, because few students used them. Perhaps what is provided in these clubs, when they are available and the status given to them needs to be investigated, together with the way in which they are viewed by the students. The low status of provision predisposes to disregard and devalues what could be an important resource for students (Wearmouth, 1997), particularly for those with few resources at home.

- The current study suggests that students' opposition to the setting of homework relates, at least in part, to the amount of time it takes up, difficulty in understanding the work in the first place, in some cases a disjunction between activities in class and the homework that is set, and, sometimes, lack of timely and constructive feedback so that they can learn from their mistakes. All these issues have clear implications for teachers in terms of ensuring the intelligibility of homework and also for considering the time demands. In short, schools need to look at what is set, when it is set and whether all pupils need to undertake it in the same way. Giving options and explaining why the work is set and what the benefits of it are

is more likely to motivate the students into completing it. Schools should understand what works best for different students. They could, for example, consider differentiating the type of homework set or give students options in how they would prefer to complete a task so that it maximizes their understanding of the work and suits their learning and working styles, for example essay, project, presentation. Schools should consider if the type of homework set suits the type of work needed in that subject, homework should be set not only to develop their understanding of the work and how to apply it but also to prepare them for the type of assessment in that subject.

8.2 Contribution to knowledge

Findings from this study make a number of contributions to knowledge about the purpose of homework:

- It is clear that the same issues that are apparent in research literature and published commentaries about the rationale underpinning the use of homework are still apparent. In 1885 Gladman stated that the point of homework was for recapitulation, preparation, independent work, useful evening employment, preparation for inspection and the cooperation of parents. In 1999 Hallam gave similar points about homework including promoting academic learning, developing generic skills, benefiting schools and promoting communication with home. In 2014 the schools involved in the current study stated the point of homework was to consolidate learning, extend learning, preparation for classwork, develop independent learning and study skills and cover the curriculum. The same claims about the efficacy continue to be made, therefore, without, it seems, schools carrying out any evaluation of whether the rhetoric matches the reality.

- The same political stance pertains as it always did: no political party will take a stand on homework and make a decision on whether a school should set it or not. In the current context if a government tried to enforce work carried out by students in their own homes this might be seen to contravene legislation associated with parental rights and entitlements, as well as the rights of young people. The findings from the current study surface some of the contradictions inherent in schools' expectations as required by central government, and what actually takes place.
- The uncertainties and contradictions in approaches to the setting of homework are reflected in the different views of families and students on the one hand, and schools on the other about its importance. These views really should be reconciled, if at all possible, for the benefit of students.
- The highest stress levels reported by students were to be found in the highest achieving school. This may well reflect the pressure that is put on them by the schools to achieve well on the academic league tables, and by the students themselves in an endeavour to gain good examination grades in the hope of finding suitable well-paid employment or going on to further study. This finding reflects others investigating students' stress levels in a context of the marketization of education, for example the Third Report (Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2008).
- Finally, the current study identifies a number of issues that continue to need consideration about homework but through the discussion in this thesis those questions and possible outcomes may begin to be understood and addressed.

8.3 Strengths and constraints of the current study

The current study has a number of strengths but also is subject to some constraints:

Strengths

Strengths include:

- the originality in choice of participant groups;
- the thoroughness of the literature review;
- the appropriateness of the methodology for addressing the research focus and main research question(s);
- the rigour and transparency with which the data were collected and analysed;
- the nature of the relationship between researcher and the six schools that enable both an on-going facilitative approach and made the data collection feasible in busy school environments.

The current study is the only one to include the whole range of participant groups in schools that might be called stakeholders in relation to the use of homework. Statistical comparisons of their views enabled a clear understanding of the similarities and differences between. Articulation of the differences between the views of, for example, students/parents on the one hand, and school staff on the other enabled a light to be shone on the gap between rhetoric and practice that is especially important in the current context where appearance of progress and achievement is particularly important.

At the beginning of the study it was especially challenging to find published material relating to homework. There was much that was published in the United States of America but not in the United Kingdom. The researcher had

to rely on four main authors: Gordon (1980), MacBeath and Turner (1990), Sharp *et al* (2001) and Weston (1999). However, a study of the sources used by these authors and then reference to *Hansard*, newspapers across time beginning with the nineteenth century, and later, contact with Australian educationalists Horsley and Walker, widened the literature base greatly. The base includes an original teacher training textbook published in 1885 in which there is a chapter on home lessons in which is quoted a set of purposes of the setting of homework at that time. By the end of the study the literature sources may be described as comprehensive.

The researcher adopted a mixed methods approach that she undertook through questionnaires, interviews and reviews of original documents. This enabled her to triangulate by method as well as by participant group (see above) and so to surface issues very important to the current context in which school homework policies and practices are developed (see discussion above).

The researcher took a deliberately rigorous and transparent approach to data collection and analysis so that the findings and interpretation of these would be trustworthy.

The researcher had already established a strong professional relationship with the six schools and was trusted by them so that when ethical considerations were discussed they knew she would behave in the way that she indicated in the information sheet.

Constraints

The constraints inherent in the study include the size of the sample groups, the use of options for possible responses, the time available for the study, both on the part of the researcher and also of the participants, reliance on the

schools to give questionnaires to students and return them, and reliance on students to give questionnaires to their families and return them

This, essentially, is a small-scale study in that it comprises six schools only in one urban area of England. Within each school there was a variable response rate to the questionnaires. In one school, for example, there were no governors who returned the questionnaire, and only two teachers in another school. The results from the questionnaires have been reported largely as percentages in order to make comparisons across schools and across participant groups even though, in other circumstances and with a different rationale, these might more appropriately have been reported as raw numbers.

Time constraints may have played a part in the low response rate of some groups of participants (see comments on size of participant groups above in Table 6.1). The fact that the research was reliant on the schools to distribute the questionnaires within the schools and on students in relation to their families was also constraining.

The decision to provide options for possible responses on the questionnaires was taken for ease of response on the part of the participants, and to ensure similarity of responses for comparison purposes. Even though the range of responses to each question was based on the literature reviewed, this decision did, however, constrain the responses that were made. To counter this space was provided for open-ended responses, but this may not have been sufficient for participants to express their view fully.

Due to a request from the first senior teacher interviewee that the interview was not recorded it was decided not to record any interviews. This meant

that all notes taken during the interviews were handwritten by the interviewer whilst asking questions.

If the researcher carried out a further study of this kind, and if the necessary time and resources were available to her she would address these constraints by probing some of the responses on the questionnaires through interview, and distributing as many of the questionnaires herself as she could, for example by attendance at governors' and staff meetings.

8.4 Conclusion

There are some important findings which need to be addressed by further investigation.

Homework has been, and will continue to be debated. The research has shown that homework can make a contribution to achievement but it has also shown that it can be disruptive to what the students are doing outside school, including family life. Although successive government may set guidelines for homework, they will not make homework statutory school policy

It might be assumed that the factors identified by Hallam (2004) as important in understanding the context in which homework policies and practices are developed act to maintain the current position regarding the perceived purpose of homework. There is little doubt that the current national political context, economic considerations of supporting young people to achieve as much as they can to give themselves the best possible chance of finding profitable employment, social aspects relating to relationships between families and children and families and schools, and, finally, educational factors related to the requirements of the National Curriculum are highly influential over current policies and practices in schools. However, pragmatically it seems that there is much schools themselves can do to make

the setting and completion of homework much more meaningful, manageable and conducive of higher student achievement. For example the following is implied by the findings of the current study. If homework is set:

- to support learning it can be set to either reinforce the work carried out in class or in preparation for future classwork. When setting homework the resources needed to complete the work must be considered, taking into account the fact that not all pupils have access to the same resources and even though the school may offer a homework club not all pupils who should be accessing it are able to or want to access it.
- to support independent learning then it must be set so that students can complete it without help and school must ensure that it is the student's own work.
- for families to work together then this work cannot be assessed as there is no indication of what is completed by adults and the students.
- to prepare for future lessons then resources and home circumstances should be taken into account. Do pupils have access to what is needed to complete the task and do they have the opportunity at home to do it.
- to make sure the curriculum is covered, then questions need to be addressed as to why the curriculum cannot be covered in class time. Is this due to not enough time being allocated on the timetable for the subject, has the work not been planned accordingly by the departments and teachers or are the pupils undertaking a curriculum not suited to their ability and needs.

- to cover all the work not completed in lesson time is this because the teacher, although is given enough time, is unable to cover the curriculum due to managing the class and the work and therefore does this teacher need support from the school in managing their class and time effectively.
- equivalent to an extra lesson per week the class teacher has to plan, prepare and assess (PPA) this work in addition to the timetabled lessons. A teacher is entitled to 10 per cent PPA time of their contracted 1265 hours of directed time in school. This equates on average to three hours per week to plan, prepare and assess all their lessons and homework each week. Therefore it is reasonable to state that a teacher cannot complete all PPA within this time. If the teacher did not have to set and mark homework then this time could be used to plan lessons in a more constructive way and therefore reduce the need for additional work through homework.
- because it has always been done this way it is time to reassess the purpose and the place of it within the curriculum.

If managed properly, homework can be a powerful tool and resource in the education of the student, but if not managed properly, it can cloud the education experience which lasts a lifetime.

APPENDICES

Oct. 16, 1880.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

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chapters on the relations of the heart to the general system, and the best methods of maintaining the integrity of its functions. Teachers will be especially interested in the relation between healthy heart action and physical exercise. We quote a suggestion for the cure of the troublesome habit of blushing, in the hope that, even in these degenerate days, there may still be some need of the recipe—"a free use of the Kilbarchan weaver's prayer, 'O Lord! gie me a gude conceit o' mysel!'" has occasionally been followed by the happiest results."

CORRESPONDENCE.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of our Correspondents. Communications should be written on one side of the paper only, and be authenticated by the Name and Address of the Writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

WHY WE KEEP IN.

SIR,—Mrs. Sarr's recent proposal to place a check on the practice of "keeping in" would perhaps appear, to some people, one that ought to be gratifying to the teacher as well as the scholar. I, for one, am not gratified. I should indeed be very pleased to escape the daily burden of "studies after school-hours," providing certain results could be obtained without it. The London Board allows a space of two hours for dinner, or, allowing for dismissal and assembling, an hour and three-quarters. Of this I seldom get more than the three-quarters; my actual dinner-time being narrowed down to fifteen minutes, owing to my having to walk a mile home. Why then do I, in defiance of the laws of digestion, bolt my mid-day meal at this inordinate rate? Possibly the couple of papers, which I enclose to you, Mr. Editor, may elucidate my reply. Both the writers of these papers are boys in the same standard. One, out of five sums, works five right; in a fairly difficult piece of dictation, he makes two mistakes. The other has his arithmetic all wrong, and twenty-three errors in spelling. Out of a class of fourscore, there are some better than the former, several worse than the latter. At the end of the school year, the whole of these children will be expected to "show the same level of ability." A certain proportion are sure to pass; hence, they will seldom be condemned to "studies after school-hours." The rest will seldom enjoy the pleasure of leaving school at twelve. Month after month they will be detained till their style of work approximates to that of the more forward portion of the class. It may be doubtful if some of them will ever attain that point. Still, the teacher can but "keep in" and "hope on," for his whole work will probably be judged by the appearance of the columns devoted to the three E's in the Examination (Schedule). Before the thought of that schedule all else pales into insignificance. The mental capacity of the scholar, his bodily health, the convenience of his family—nay, even the teacher's own capacity, health, and convenience are disregarded. Teachers labour for the reward of a good percentage, much as moths flutter round a candle. They know it is dangerous, but they persist in doing it. Need we wonder that they find their personal interest in their scholars decreasing and giving way to an interest which is simply pecuniary? I declare positively that when one of my backward boys died of bronchitis a few weeks back, I felt a measure of relief for his death would make one "failure" the less. And who is it to blame for this state of things? Is it the inspector, or manager, or Board which insists on estimating the value of a teacher's work by the scheduled results of an annual examination, or the teacher who endeavours to satisfy these peculiar requirements by keeping himself and his scholars at "studies after school-hours?"

A SCHOOL BOARD ASSISTANT.

MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS OF THE N. U. E. T.

SIR,—Kindly allow me a small space for a remark or two on the "reason," as given by "Non-Member," for not being a member of the N. U. E. T. He says, "I had a note sent informing me of a meeting. I did not go," &c. Here is plainly shown the fact that the secretary of the association did his duty. He sent the note, and conveyed the idea that "Non-Member" did his—i.e., do they inform us that he acknowledged the note, stating that he would be unable to attend, but would be glad to do so whenever convenient? I fancy not. Had he done so, he would no doubt have received notice of other meetings, and thus have become connected with the Association, and consequently with the N. U. E. T.

The addresses of secretaries of association are now-a-days easily attainable. It seems to me, therefore, rather hard to throw the blame on the secretary, when, if my reading of "Non-Member's" note be correct it should be placed nearer home.—I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully, SECRETARY.

SIR,—I think the gentleman whose letter appeared in your issue of October 2nd, and signed "Non-Member," would make an excellent secretary of association. It is a pity he is not secured, for he evidently has the good of the N. U. E. T. at heart, and is made of the stuff which produces energetic secretaries. It is a pity, however, he was not more explicit, for if he had only just said in how "he does not do things" he would have done better than acknowledge that he is one of those who receive a "note" or invitation to a meeting, but does not go, nor, judging by inference, does he even acknowledge the receipt of the invitation.

I can heartily sympathise with your correspondent, "D. W. Remison." I have been asked by some "non-members" whether I had got some interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in soliciting teachers to become members; but, Sir, I think it needless to explain from what class of teacher that came. One gentleman who had been invited to several of our meetings made his appearance at one—a social gathering, in fact—and in making himself known to me, said, quite condescendingly, "What an indefatigable secretary you are! I thought I must come to this, you know; but I shan't join the association, though I suppose there will be no objection to my joining your social meetings." Well, now, Sir, I thought that rather cool, especially as he was one of those "non-members" who will not take the trouble to answer even a pressing letter.

Now comes my suggestion, if my brother secretaries will allow me. When a new teacher comes into your district, call on him or her, if possible—more particularly if a lady. One visit will do more good than a thousand circulars. I consider it, too, a duty of a teacher established in a district to call on a new comer. It is common politeness, and this, too, is more particularly the case with an officer of an association. I have rarely found it fail—only two cases in its years. I think there is not a teacher within eight or ten miles who is not a member, and this principally by personal visits. In summer, when in want of a walk, I make it my business to go in a certain direction—combine business with pleasure; and I can assure my brother secretaries it is a plan worth a trial. I know all have

not the time "to be up and doing" in such fashion, one visit alone to a country district like this meaning a sacrifice of half a day, at least; but still I say it is the best plan.

Let us hear no more complaints such as that from "Non-Member." Let him "be up and doing," and if the secretary will not look him up, let him look-up the secretary. I will engage the latter will thank him, and be glad to make his acquaintance.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

THE SECRETARY.

Warwick and District Teachers' Association.

AN IMPOSTOR—A CAUTION.

SIR,—In your paper of last week Mr. Ballam exposes a fellow named Oannell. As this man imposed on some of my friends in London, I asked one of them to describe him, and now send you the description, hoping it may be of use to teachers in detecting him.—He is about five feet six or seven in height, fair, thick set, light moustache, and no whiskers, and quite bald on the top of his head.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

JOSEPH DIXON.

CHURCH SCHOOLMASTERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION—
"ORPHAN DAY" COLLECTION.

SIR,—Finding that from various causes many of the subscribers were not directly solicited to take part in our "Orphan Day" collection this year in time to allow of it on the appointed day—Tuesday last, October 13th—will you kindly allow me to apologise for the delay in so doing, and to say that, where that was the case, the "Orphan Day" may be deferred to the coming week, or even to that following it. We are, of course, most anxious that our Orphan Fund should not suffer from the cause referred to, and feel sure that this intimation will have the effect of averting such a result. The scholars' collecting cards will be gladly supplied on application.

All collections should be paid in as soon as possible either to the local secretary or myself, in order that the votes to which the collectors are entitled may be issued in time for the Orphan Election on 30th inst.—Yours faithfully,

G. W. PERRY, Gen. Sec.

APPEAL ON BEHALF OF MRS. RUDGE.

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me, through the medium of your valuable paper, to thank the teachers, both head and assistant, of the following schools for their kind assistance and sympathy in my bereavement, and you will greatly oblige.—Yours obediently,

JULIA RUDGE.

H. Dalry, £1; Worthington-road, £1 10s.; Portobello-road, £1 14s.; Edinburgh-road, 15s. 6d.; Middle-row, 14s.; "D" street, 17s.; Buckingham-terrace, 11s.; Silver-street, 15s.; Lashmer-road, 8s. 6d.; Victoria-road, 11s.; Saunders-road, 14s. 6d.; Harwood-road, 18s.; Marlboro'-road, 10s. 6d.; Crown-road, 11s.; Star-lane, 18s. 6d.; Kilhampton National School, 10s.; Cook's Grounds, per Mr. G. Gray and friends, 28s.; total, £19 13s. 6d.

63, Boyson-road, Cambarwell, S.E.

READING AND LITERATURE.

SIR,—I should feel obliged to you if you would kindly allow me to call the attention of teachers to the above subjects. The footnote to A. 23 says:—"Reading will be held to include intelligence and fluency." In literature "the knowledge of meaning and allusions" is demanded.

I maintain that inspectors and assistants are exceeding the Code when they expect "meaning and allusions" in reading, in Standards V and VI.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

A TEACHER.

THE N. U. E. T. AND THE AMENDMENT OF THE CODE.

SIR,—The Executive has probably never sent out any recommendations that were open to so many objections as the first one in the circular that was recently issued to secretaries of associations. They are clumsy, unjust, and unworkable. There is, however, some in the recommendation for some alteration in the present mode of paying for the services of a teacher's work. The Code ought to be so arranged that I should be paid for a conscientious teacher's work, and a sound association as opposed to mere instruction, to his scholars. It is acknowledged by all that at present such a teacher generally loses both in reputation and in salary by so doing, and that master obtains both the highest credit and the largest remuneration who gets his quick children ready for the examination in six months, and devotes the remainder of the school year to cramming and drilling his dullards, in order to secure 80 or 85 per cent. These latter constitute generally about one-sixth of the whole number, and they receive two-thirds of a teacher's attention, if he aims mainly at high percentages.

There is a much simpler remedy for this than the intricate arrangements proposed by the Executive. Let a good percentage of passes be secured, say eighty-five, and let no further grant be paid if a higher one be secured. Many teachers and many schools will raise money slightly, and none will get more. But let teachers consider how slight the loss will be, and how great the gain. An example will illustrate it best. Take a school with sixty children on the examination schedule, excluding infants. Suppose, by hard straining, they might have obtained ninety per cent., but are encouraged up to eighty-five per cent. only. The money lost at the amount is £1 7s. 6d. worth the dishonesty of neglecting the brighter children for half their school-life? If the Department could be persuaded to pay double for children who passed through two stages in one year, and exempted this payment from the eighty-five per cent. limit, the tendency of the Code would be as distinctly on the side of the quicker children as it is now on the side of the dunces and the irregular.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION.

On Friday October 1st, Sir Josiah Mason's Science College, Birmingham, which has been built and endowed by him at a cost of £170,000, was opened by Professor Huxley. At present there are only four departments in the college—chemistry, physics, mathematics, and biology—but the trustees deal of the college, with the view of introducing other subjects, so as to enable the students to obtain the best and most practical scientific education.

Professor Huxley, who was introduced by the Mayor (Alfred Edward Chamberlain), then delivered the inaugural address, beginning with a reference to the occasion six years ago, when he was present at the opening of the college.

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES OF THE COST OF EDUCATION.

THE Civil Service estimates for the year ending March 31, 1882, show that the total increase of expenditure under Class IV., which includes education, science, and art, amounts to 178,995*l*. The most important items that help to make up this increase are 147,991*l*. for public education in England, 9,122*l*. for public education in Scotland, 7,602*l*. for public education in Ireland, and 11,882*l*. for the British Museum. The average number of scholars in England and Wales for 1881-82 is estimated at 2,983,683 in day schools, and 49,703 in evening schools. Owing to the expected increase in the number at school, the sum of 2,362,142*l*. will be required for grants to day and evening schools, as against 2,217,342*l*. the estimate for the previous year. In the aggregate the estimate for public education in England amounts to 2,683,058*l*. as compared with 2,635,967*l*. for the previous year.

The estimate of the amount required for teachers' pensions has risen from 4,930*l*. to 5,550*l*. It is estimated that there will also be an increase under the following heads:—Office salaries, 782*l*.; inspectors' salaries, 7,060*l*. There is a decrease of 2,000*l*. in the amount of grants to training colleges. There is also a decrease in the amount provided for payment of the fees of those children who obtain the certificate of proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and also the certificate of previous due attendance at a public elementary school required by the Education Act of 1876. The estimate this year is 9,600*l*. as against an estimate of 10,375*l*. in the previous year.

The average attendance in day schools for the year ending August 31, 1880, was 2,750,019, as against 2,594,966 in the previous year, thus showing an increase in the average attendance of 155,021. The rate of grant per day scholar is estimated for the year 1881-82 at 15*s*. 8*d*., as against an estimate of 15*s*. 8*d*. for 1880-81. The grant for each night scholar is expected to decrease from 9*s*. to 8*s*. 9*d*.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

A SCHOOL BOARD FREAK.

THE *Saturday Review* says:—"The strongest advocates of the compulsory clauses of the Education Act must have been moved to a momentary repentance by the appearance presented by the London School Board in the Wandsworth Police Court last week. It will not answer for the School Board, in the long run, to have its cases dismissed with costs. If any considerable number of parents find that the School Board superintendent is sharply censured by the police magistrate, and is told that the Board ought never to have dreamed of instituting proceedings on the evidence before it, the deference paid by the poor to the visitors' warnings will be very much lessened. To hold out prelude to the infliction of a fine, but simply as the first move in a game which two can play at. The larger the number of parents summoned before a police magistrate, the more indisposed he will ordinarily be to convict any large portion of them. Vague fears of unpleasant consequences to arise from keeping children at home are by far the most efficacious means of getting them to school; and, as evidence to the tender-heartedness of the police magistrate multiplies, this fear loses its influence. In the present case, however, the Board was not merely careless of its own interest, and, by consequence, of the interest of the ratepayers. Had its error ended there, it would have been sufficiently punished by the ridicule which the proceedings cast on the action of its visitors. But, in the process of making itself absurd, it went out of its way to annoy a man with whom, properly speaking, it was not at all concerned. The visitor of a certain street in Wandsworth had observed, it seems, that, when the children whom she could trace to the several houses, had been sent off to school, there was one family left behind which apparently needed no education. This was so shocking an exception that he felt compelled to make an immediate investigation into the reason of it. Apparently, however, he approached the inquiry with a preconceived determination that it should have but one result. In that particular street—a street from which thirty-five children daily went forth to the nearest Board school—no girl could be held sufficient to justify the keeping of a child at home. When the mystery of inquiry had been sounded to its depths, it turned out that this misguided householder had presumed to think that his wife was competent to teach her own children. Whether the visitor is of opinion that no limit should be placed to the interference of the School Board, does not appear. Possibly, if left to himself, he would like to drag every child in London to a Board school. In practice, however, he no doubt recognises that there is a point beyond which he must not go; but he was not of opinion that a mere solicitor—though he might also be a good classical scholar—could make good his claim to exemption. Had the father turned out to be the president of the Incorporated Law Society, or a professor at one of the universities, the visitor would probably have retired from the chase; but no lesser eminence than this could content him. What makes the whole case more extraordinary is, that the defendant told the magistrate that he had offered to submit his child

to be examined on behalf of the School Board, but that he had received for answer an intimation that he must send her to school. The School Board was determined to rush upon its fate. To Caesar, in the person of Mr. Paget, it appealed, and to Caesar it accordingly went. It is to be hoped that the result of its appeal will suggest to it some elementary considerations of prudence which may serve to keep it out of harm's way another time. The intention of Parliament in passing the Education Act was not to give School Boards a summary power of searching for children in private houses, whether there is or is not any decent reason for supposing that they are being allowed to go untaught. The Legislature meant to remedy a patent and flagrant evil. Some millions of children were growing up in a state of ignorance which was certain to hamper them in earning a livelihood, and consequently not unlikely to lead them into crime. If the streets of London are at all a fair test of the success with which the Act has been worked, there is still considerable room for the exercise of the School Board's energies without its being necessary to touch a single child whose inability to read and write may not be proved by the application of the simplest test. Why it should please this well-meaning but wrong-headed body to wander into fields where success must at best be so doubtful as the one they have been working at Wandsworth, is really past explanation.

CORRESPONDENCE.

(To the Editor of the SCHOOL GUARDIAN.)

PUNCTUALITY AT SCHOOL.

Sarby Rectory, Barton-on-Humber: March 7.

SIR,—I can assure your correspondent "A. E. B." that my rules for punctual attendances had the full sanction of Her Majesty's inspector.

Of course they are subject to the conscience clause; and, should the parent of any child object to the religious teaching, I should still insist on punctual attendance at the time of opening school, and provide secular instruction in another room for that child. If "A. E. B." looks at Owen's Manual (12th ed., p. 83, note 4) he will see that "a parent may withdraw his child from the religious observance; but the child is not to be withdrawn from the school during the religious observance, &c., when the school arrangements will admit of secular and religious instruction being carried on in different parts of the school at the same time."

It is, I think, abundantly clear that the Act of 1876 was never intended to interfere with the order and discipline of any school, but simply to secure freedom of conscience and a certain fixed amount of secular instruction at each meeting.

If "A. E. B." cannot provide secular instruction under the conscience clause in a separate room, I should suggest his having the religious instruction during the last hour of the morning meeting. This, at all events, would ensure punctuality.

C. W. MARSHAM.

HOME LESSONS AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.

SIR,—I should be glad of advice under the following circumstances:—I have been mistress of a school many years, and for nearly eleven years in my present school. I have raised the Government grant from 28*l*. to something over 42*l*., and always, to the best of my knowledge, given satisfaction both to managers and parents. Since last examination, one or two of the parents have objected to their children taking home lessons; and will not have them detained after school hours to do their work, nor corrected in any way; and they have complained to the managers of a very slight correction administered to one child. Such an example is exercising a serious influence on the discipline of the school. I shall be glad to receive, through the medium of your pages, the advice of any experienced teacher to meet the case, as I must confess myself at a loss how to do so.

SUSANNE.

MANCHESTER CHURCH TEACHERS.

Manchester: March 7.

SIR,—Kindly correct an error in your otherwise excellent report of the meeting of the Manchester Church Teachers' Association, which was held at Stretford, on the 26th ult.

I said that "one of our clerical managers strongly objected to the extent of the requirements of the new syllabus, and that another gentleman, who had been a school manager several years, gave it as his opinion" &c. The italicised words are omitted in your report.

EDW. W. AYRES.

SEPT. 20, 1884]

The School Guardian.

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MEETINGS AND SPEECHES.

SIR R. CROSS ON VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

SIR RICHARD A. CROSS on Wednesday afternoon opened a new Church school at Pemberton, near Wigan, this being the completion of a scheme commenced two years ago for providing increased school accommodation for the district. The Education Department threatened to order the establishment of a School Board in the township, but the inhabitants preferred to get the money to raise the standard of teaching beyond the purely elementary system originally intended, and he heard talk of raising secondary schools out of the rates, which was a purpose for which the rates in the first instance were not intended. It was quite right that a child should receive out of the rates if he could not get it in any other way all the education that was necessary for him to raise himself in the social scale, and when he was taught certain simple things, and how to teach himself anything, he (Sir Richard) believed they had done for the child pretty nearly all that was wanted. The second point to which he wanted to refer was that when the Act was passed it was urged that it was passed for the purpose, not of supplanting, but of supplementing the voluntary schools, and that wherever voluntary schools existed they were to be allowed to exist and encouraged; they were not to be supplanted by Board schools put in their places simply because the Education Department wished the Board schools should have the first place in the land. Those assembled were all of one mind—that however they might educate a man and teach him reading, writing, and arithmetic, and other simple matters, it was not worth calling education if they left out the question of religion, which must be at the bottom of all education. In the Board schools, unfortunately—in some places at all events—religious teaching was practically and absolutely ignored. They were not allowed in some schools even to explain any part of Scripture, but merely to read it to the children, so that they might understand it for themselves or not understand it. The foundation of all true education was religion. Having referred to the late Dr. Arnold as a strong advocate of religious education, Sir Richard said he was very proud to see that in the district of Pemberton they were thoroughly determined, whatever the Education Department might say, that they would not have a School Board, but would carry out education by their own voluntary efforts, so that they might in their own voluntary schools ensure for all their children religious education, believing that education without religion was really not worth having.

THE TEACHERS' BENEVOLENT FUND.

A MEETING of the central committee of this fund was held at 57 Chancery Lane, W.C., on Monday, September 15, and the following members were present:—Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Burgwin, Miss Dousley, and Messrs. Neill (chairman), F. A. Smith, Chase, Tomlinson (treasurer), Urry, Morgan, Hale (vice-chairman), Wild, B.A., Dawson, B.A., Webb, Vince, Murché, and Voisey.

The minutes of the July meeting were read and signed. The Chairman referred in feeling terms to the heavy bereavement which Mr. Hilton had sustained, and it was unanimously resolved that a letter of sympathy and condolence be sent to Mr. Hilton. Loans in arrear were all reported.

Mr. Hale stated that the emergency relief committee had considered seven applications, and had made five grants. The action of the committee was endorsed.

Twenty applications for relief were then submitted to the meeting, and each case was carefully considered, with the result that fourteen grants were made and six appeals were declined as not requiring or deserving aid. Of the fourteen who were relieved, four were widows, six were completely broken down in health, and the others were infirm or in special difficulty. A cheque for 58*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*, the relief granted, was ordered to be drawn.

The Chairman introduced the subject of the reorganisation of the National Union of Elementary Teachers in its relation to the benevolent fund, and moved a resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Morgan. After a long discussion it was resolved, by ten votes to two, to defer the further consideration of the matter *sine die*.

A report of the work and progress of the fund for the past half-year was agreed to, and will be sent to the Executive of the National Union of Elementary Teachers in accordance with the bye-laws.

A new local board had been formed by the Redhill Association, and it was recognised, and the thanks of the committee were passed to the teachers who had organised it.

Votes of thanks were also passed to "S. M." per Mr. Hale, and to Mr. E. Goddall, Eastgate National School, Darlington, for contributions of 5*l.* to the fund.

THE TEACHERS' ORPHANAGE AND ORPHAN FUND.

This September meeting of the council of this fund was held at 57 Chancery Lane, W.C., on Friday, the 5th inst. Mr. Wells presided, and the members present were:—Miss Prosser and Messrs. Devonshire (treasurer), Sykes, Morrell, Lee, Vincent, Boxall, Wild, B.A., W. R. Russell, Oliver, Balchin, Webb, and Haller (secretary).

The minutes of the July meeting were read and signed. The Assistant-Secretary read his monthly report, and it was resolved that an election to the orphanage and to home allowances should be held in December.

Frank L. Scott, of Harpurhey, Manchester, was elected to enter the orphanage at once.

Mr. Devonshire brought up the following report of the house committee, which was received:—

"Since presenting the last report the committee have held six meetings, and have agreed upon a time-table and a dietary-table for the use of the orphanage.

"Systematic visitation is made by a rota committee, who are appointed monthly, and who report regularly on the general arrangements and management of the institution. Watchful oversight is given to the expenditure, and the committee will be in a position shortly to report the cost per head for maintenance, &c. The accounts for the past two months are presented through the finance committee.

"The two boys elected by the council in July have entered into residence, and there are now fourteen boys in the house. All the boys, with one exception, have a weekly lesson in swimming, and five of them are taught to play the piano.

"During the school holidays an assistant-master was engaged temporarily to take charge of the boys and accompany them in their walks. Three of the boys went to visit their friends.

"Various gifts of crockery, stationery, maps, and cricket-balls have been duly acknowledged by the committee.

"The greenhouse has been removed, and a swing is being erected gratuitously in its place. The garden is being rearranged and adapted for use as a playground.

"The committee propose to have a formal opening of the institution as near the second week of October as possible."

Mr. Webb brought up the report of the finance committee, which was received, and the recommendations were adopted.

An application to renew a special grant made last year on behalf of two orphan children was granted.

Resolutions from the Birmingham and East Northumberland Associations in reference to the last orphan election were reported.

A hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Golding, Board School, Netherton, Dudley, for a donation of 5*l.* to the orphan fund.

Quarterly reports were presented on the health and progress of thirty-eight out of the thirty-nine orphans who are now receiving home allowances, and were accepted as satisfactory.

A proposition to seek advice on the conversion of Government stock was met by the previous question, which was carried.

A vote of thanks was given to the chairman.

NOTTINGHAM SCHOOL BOARD.

This monthly meeting of this Board was held on the 11th inst.

Evening Schools.

Mr. Ashwell, in moving the adoption of a report on "Evening Schools," said that the reading and writing in the evening classes was fairly satisfactory; but the arithmetic very defective. In future they must pay more attention to that subject, the importance of which could not be over-estimated in a trading community like theirs. The report showed a larger attendance than in previous years, an increase on the grant earned, and, although the improvement was not great, the tendency was on the whole in a satisfactory direction. He and the committee wished that the head-masters and mistresses would impress upon scholars leaving the day schools the extreme desirability of continuing their education in the evening classes, and thus expending their evenings in a suitable and profitable manner.

Home-Lessons.

The school management committee had received a communication from the Association of Head-Teachers under the Board, enclosing a copy of the following resolution:—"It is the opinion of this meeting that under existing circumstances it will greatly assist teachers in the performance of their duties if the Board will issue instructions respecting home-lessons." The teachers further stated that since the recent judgment in the High Court of Justice in reference to home-lessons they had increased difficulties in the matter. The committee also had their attention directed to the new responsibilities imposed upon school authorities by Arts. 8 and 109 of the Education Code, 1884, with respect to the health of children, &c. The following additional regulations were accordingly recommended for the guidance of managers and teachers, subject to the approval of the Board:—School hours: In cases where it is found necessary to detain children after the ordinary school hours for the purposes of discipline or punishment, the period of detention shall not exceed thirty minutes, which shall be spent under the immediate supervision of a responsible teacher. The following times shall be allowed daily for recreation, and shall be spent in the playground

whenever the weather is favourable:—Infants' departments, 10.45 A.M. to 11, and 3.20 P.M. to 3.40; junior and senior departments, 11 A.M. to 11.15. One or more of the teachers shall remain in the yard during the whole of the recess, and be responsible for the superintendence of the children. In wet or severe weather the recess should be devoted to bright and interesting physical exercises indoors. The children's play-time will furnish an excellent opportunity for thorough air-flushing of the rooms, by throwing open all windows and doors, and it is hoped that head-teachers will sedulously avail themselves of this aid to effective ventilation, which is a question of vital importance, affecting not only comfort, order, and efficient work, but also the health of both scholars and teachers. The Board request the hearty co-operation of all head-teachers in securing the intelligent carrying out in their various departments of the provisions of the circular of the works committee, dated June, 1884, calling the attention of teachers to the necessity for keeping the upper windows and ceiling and other ventilators constantly open, and for throwing open all doors and windows immediately at dismissal or play, to allow of thorough air-flushing of the rooms. The home-lessons of the scholars shall be graded, as far as practicable, to suit the capacities of the children, and the work given shall not be more than can be accomplished by an average child in about half-an-hour. Head-teachers shall carefully supervise the exercises set by assistant and junior teachers, to ensure that the children are not over-taxed. No home-lessons shall be given in infants' departments, and the head-teachers shall exempt from home-lessons any scholar in delicate health, or who shows signs of undue mental strain. Home-lessons may not be enforced against the will of the parents, but in case of any objection, teachers should endeavour to see the parents, with a view of gaining their co-operation. Head-teachers shall see that the work of the school is carried on strictly according to the time-table. The Board looks with great disfavour upon the temporary neglect of any branch of instruction under the idea of its being subsequently worked up for examination. Their intention is that the instruction in the several subjects in their schools shall be given steadily, regularly, and continuously, and they are pleased to believe it is so given in most cases.

NOTICES OF MEETINGS.

- September 20.—Glamorgan and Carmarthen (Committee). Mackworth Hotel, Neath. 2.30 P.M.
 September 20.—South Essex. Church Road Board Schools, Layton, Essex. 3 P.M.
 September 20.—West Lambeth. General Meeting. Bolingbroke Hall, Battersea Rise, S.W. 3 P.M.
 September 20.—North-West Surrey. National School, Godalming.
 September 26.—British Teachers' Club. Anlerton's Hotel. 8 P.M.
 September 27.—Surrey Church Teachers. St. Mark's School, Reigate. 3.15 P.M.
 September 27.—Attleboro' and Haring. East Haring School. 2 P.M.
 September 27.—Chester (Quarterly). St. Peter's School, Chester. 2 P.M.
 September 27.—Chew Valley. Chew Magna Infants' School. 3 P.M.
 September 27.—Exeter. St. Sidwell's Schools, Exeter. 2.30 P.M.
 September 27.—Chelsea. The Athenaeum, Shepherd's Bush, W. 3 P.M.
 September 27.—British (Quarterly). Borough Road College.
 September 27.—Norwich Conference Com. at 2.30, Association at 3.
 Surrey Road Board School, Norwich.
 September 27.—Potterne Deanery (3rd Portion). National School, Holt. 3.30 P.M.
 October 4.—Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Girls' School. Address by Rev. F. Bell, Diocesan Inspector for Peterborough.

DR. CRICHTON BROWNE'S REPORT ON OVER-PRESSURE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

DR. CRICHTON BROWNE'S Report, together with a copy of Mr. Fitch's Memorandum, has been issued this week as a Parliamentary paper. The Report and Memorandum, which occupy seventy-nine pages of foolscap, are too long for insertion at length in our columns; but we propose to extract some of the most important passages for the information of our readers.

Over-pressure does exist.

The general result of my observations on the schools which I have visited is to confirm the opinions which I ventured to state at our interview—to the effect that educational over-pressure does exist to some extent in elementary schools; that it is even now exerting appreciable evil effects; and that, if unchecked, it is likely to entail very serious consequences on future generations.

These opinions were at that time founded, as I took occasion to explain, firstly, on statements made to me by my medical brethren, whom I am in the habit of meeting in every district of the country; secondly, on my own knowledge of the fact that certain of the educational practices pursued in elementary schools are at variance with great physiological laws, which cannot be set at naught with impunity; and thirdly, on the assumption that the severe indiscriminate brain-forcing which I have seen in operation in middle and high-class schools, and painful

instances of the mischievous results of which have fallen under my own cognisance, extends down into schools of a humble description, and bears in them the same kind of fruit that it does in its higher spheres. The foundation which these facts and inferences thus supplied for my opinions respecting educational over-pressure has now, during the investigations for which you have so kindly afforded me facilities, been greatly strengthened and enlarged by evidence drawn from other and more direct sources, and that seems to me both cogent and trustworthy.

Evidences of Over-pressure.

The existence of educational over-pressure in elementary schools ought scarcely to require demonstration. It has been authoritatively admitted by the Department over which you preside, for in the minutes and instructions issued to Her Majesty's inspectors under the Code of 1882 it is stated that "there have been many well-founded complaints of undue pressure on backward scholars." It has been affirmed by school inspectors, like Mr. Marchant Williams in his letters to the *Times*, and it has been made the subject of repeated representations by large bodies of teachers. As, however, notwithstanding this consensus of testimony in support of the existence of over-pressure, the possibility of such a thing has been even recently denied, it may be well to mention, in the first place, some evidences of it which came before me in my visits to schools, and which appeal simply to common sense, requiring no medical penetration for their perception.

Overtime in Schools.

And the first of these evidences which I would mention is the detention in school of large numbers of children, often for long periods beyond the school hours. I have myself come on a group of twenty children, out of a standard of sixty, working wearily with their books and slates half-an-hour after the time at which they ought to have gone home to dinner, and in all the schools which I have visited, except three, it has been admitted that it is the custom to keep in a certain proportion of children for special instruction at certain seasons. In some schools the detention is short, rarely exceeding a quarter of an hour per diem for six weeks or two months in the year, and being limited to 15 or 20 per cent. of a few standards; but in others it has been greatly protracted, even as far as an hour and a-half per diem, has been applied to all the standards, except the very youngest (and in some as many as 50 per cent. of the children have been kept in), and has lasted for six months in the year.

Now, what, it may be asked, is the meaning of this detention? The children are not kept in as a punishment for negligence or any fault, and it can scarcely be supposed that the teachers, already worked to the top of their strength, are carrying on their work beyond its necessary limits for their own gratification. The hours of prescribed school attendance, from 9 A.M. till 12 noon, and from 2 P.M. till 4.30 P.M., are quite sufficiently long for children from seven to fourteen years of age; and no one would add to their burdens in this respect without good reason. The detention simply means that over-pressure is going on. The children kept in are those who are, from any cause, behind their work, and whom it is necessary to push on, so that they may be ready for the examination; and it is always immediately before the examination that the detention takes place. Teachers declare that they find this detention absolutely necessary in order to meet the requirements of the inspector, secure a sufficient number of passes, and maintain the reputation of the school; and the conclusion is inevitable, that the examination has now reached such a pitch that it is impossible for a considerable proportion of children to prepare for it adequately, in the ordinary school hours, and without a prologation of enforced brain activity that amounts to over-pressure.

We have the alternative of believing that the examination is too severe, or that the ordinary school hours are too short. No humane person will maintain that a period of five and a-half hours of book and brain-work in a day is too little for children from seven to fourteen years of age, and so the undue severity of the examinations, considering the circumstances of the schools in which they are conducted, must be admitted. An order prohibiting this detention of children beyond school hours, which has either, I believe, been issued, or is in contemplation, would scarcely meet the difficulty. A schoolmaster somewhat grimly remarked to me, "If we are prevented from keeping in, we must just put on the pressure in some other way."

Home-Lessons.

The second evidence of over-pressure in elementary schools, appreciable by common sense, to which I shall allude, is found in connection with home-lessons. London teachers are, as a rule, opposed to these, and they do not, therefore, in the metropolis constitute the grievance that they do in some provincial towns. In London schools, attended by children of the lowest class, it would be vain to require them; the children have to help at home, or work in some way, and so cannot do lessons out of school, and the parents would simply forbid such lessons, the book or slate sent home to enable them to be performed being probably thrown into the fire; and even where the parents had no decided objection to them, the circumstances of the home life of a large number of children are such that they could not, amongst these, prepare any lessons with advantage. A one-roomed house with five or six restless and noisy inmates is not the best place for the calm exercise of the intellect, and many teachers have discovered that the home-work which they have given out to poor-class children has been done in so slovenly a way, and required so much correction, that it wasted time and did more harm than good. In schools of the better class, however, it is possible to get home-lessons done, and in some of them they are imposed even on children of eight and nine years of age, who, after five and a-half hours

or more of school work, have to apply themselves in the evening with faded brains to spelling and sums. The quantity of work given out to be done at home is certainly not large. Even in the higher standards, where it ranges over a greater variety of subjects, including parsing, geography, and history, I have not met any children who took more than an hour and a-half to do it, and in the lower standards it is generally done in a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. But the principle of home-work is bad in the case of young children, and even where that work is moderate in amount it is often sufficient to stir up and irritate an exhausted and feeble brain, and so to interfere with sleep. It is a worry, sometimes a torment, to a child, and prevents that relaxation and entire diversion of the current of thought which ought to follow upon liberation from school. And it is one of the instruments and signs of over-pressure, and is resorted to, in nine cases out of ten, because the work to be done in the course of the year cannot be compassed by a number of scholars within the proper school hours. The fact that a large proportion of young children in London are now poring over books, racking their brains, straining their eyes, and rounding their backs, in these evening hours when they ought to be in bed, or gently subsiding towards slumber through busy idleness, is, I venture to think, a palpable evidence that over-pressure exists.

Testimony of the Teachers to Over-pressure.

The third evidence of over-pressure, appreciable to common sense, which I shall name, is the testimony of the teachers. That has been given with no uncertain sound. In their associations, and at the conferences which they have held, they have emphatically declared that serious evils are accruing from the system under which they are at present compelled to work, and in my personal intercourse with the teachers of the schools I have visited, I have found an amount of unanimity on the subject of over-pressure, which has impressed me much. I have conversed on the subject with upwards of sixty teachers, and have found only two who denied the existence of over-pressure. All the others not only admitted, but deplored it, and many of them expressed forcibly the pain they felt in having to apply it to the helpless children they are called on to teach.

It is in vain to dispute that the teachers as a body, in London, at least, believe most firmly in the existence of over-pressure, and that they are discontented with their position chiefly because of the part they have to play in imposing it.

Now, it appears to me, that on this subject the teachers must be the best possible witnesses, as they know best, and indeed only know, the standard which it is necessary for them to attain, and the amount of hard driving that it takes to bring up a proper percentage of their scholars to it. It has been hinted that they are actuated in their agitation against over-pressure by class interests and private motives, being anxious to save themselves trouble, and secure more public money upon easier terms. There are, no doubt, amongst teachers, as in every profession, confirmed grumblers and selfish sluggards; but I will not believe, after what I have seen of them, that they are as a body capable of leading themselves to an organised system of misrepresentation, or of subordinating the claims of duty to their own ease and aggrandisement. They have seemed to me as a class, intelligent, upright, and kind-hearted; and I receive with confidence the deliberate statements they make as to the difficulties and trials of their calling.

Testimony afforded by the Condition of the Children.

But, if the testimony of the teachers were disallowed, the condition of the children, which is the fourth evidence appreciable to common sense which I shall adduce, would settle the question of over-pressure; and I am now speaking of their condition, not as it appears to the medical eye, but to any ordinary observer. In the extract from the minutes and instructions already quoted, it is stated that the over-pressure which has been complained of, is on the backward scholars, and that statement supplies at once a clue to the incidence of the pressure in elementary schools. In public schools, high schools, and middle-class schools, it is the bright and clever children, those who are likely to take prizes, scholarships, and certificates, and do honour to their teachers and their schools, that are pressed; but, in elementary schools, it is the backward children that are so, and the difference in the incidence of the over-pressure in these two cases, may, I believe, be shown to be followed by a corresponding difference in its pernicious effects. But it is with over-pressure as it affects backward children that I have now to do, and these backward children, it must be remarked, are of several different varieties. An ordinary observer visiting an elementary school would, with a little assistance, be able to pick out these backward children, and after a good look at them, and a few questions, to divide them into three sets—namely, dull children, starved children, and delicate children. If, after having compared merely the bodily condition of these three sets of backward children with that of the bulk of the class, he were shown the work which has to be got through in a year, and told that the backward children are expected to do exactly the same as those who are not backward and at the same age, and that the reputation, comfort, and promotion, if not the emoluments of the teacher, will depend on the number of them that can be forced through the examination, his common sense would guide him to the conclusion that over-pressure exists. He would not only satisfy himself as to the existence of over-pressure, but would hit upon its great source—the necessity which exists for forcing up backward children to the examination level.

Dull and Backward Children.

It would, perhaps, be correct to say of London elementary schools generally that they contain from 20 to 30 per cent. of bright, clever

children, who can easily accomplish all the work required of them by the Code each year in seven or eight months; of from 40 to 60 per cent. of children of average intelligence, who can do it comfortably by steady work in the twelve months allowed; and of 20 or 30 per cent. of backward children who cannot fairly do it in that time, and who must, therefore, be pressed, and sometimes hard pressed, in order to get as many as possible of them to make a passable appearance. The clever children must be practically kept back, much to their mental and moral detriment, and the backward children must be stimulated to a rank, spongy brain growth, and to a straining effort that wrenches the whole system, and may permanently damage health, in order, if it may without irreverence be said, that the great modern giant examination may have a huge meal. The present Code may be, as Sir Lyon Playfair has said, superior to any that has preceded it, but it has certainly still one blemish, no doubt difficult to remove from a Code, but very disfiguring where it remains, the blemish of holding out a premium to mediocrity, and encouraging the teacher to expend his best energies in educating those who are least educable, and who will not only give the poorest return for the labour and capital expended on them, but are likely to be positively injured by the intellectual exertion bestowed on them. A great physiological truth underlies the words of a teacher when he said to me, "Not only do these dull children break down in health under our manipulations, but they grow more stupid, seeming to lose in general intelligence what they gain in mere technical knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Their last state is worse than their first." It is, of course, easier in such matters to find fault in vague terms than to devise remedies which shall be efficacious in the matter complained of, and do no harm in other directions; but it does seem that the Code lacks elasticity, and that it would be well if it could be made more stretchable in the direction of allowing children with talents and ambition to push on in their studies, to their own benefit and the insipidification of their teachers, and less rigid in compelling miserable, deformed, siphoned beings to march shoulder to shoulder with those whom "God has made full-limbed and tall." Richness and diversity should be the aim of education. We want men and women of infinite variety, not human dynamos turned out at so much per thousand.

The range of educational over-pressure in elementary schools is not exactly co-extensive with the ranks of backward children. It includes a considerable proportion of children of average intelligence who have attended irregularly, and have, therefore, to make up for leeway, and also a few clever children who, although more than equal to the examination, have either neglected to prepare for it in time, or work for it, under the influence of that emotional excitement that the approach of an examination, as now conducted, never fails to create in a school, and that is really one of the most dangerous elements in educational over-pressure. There is no fact more certain than this, that mental labour is dangerous to health, and shortens life just in proportion as emotional disturbance is mixed up with it. It is not so much the intellectual effort demanded in elementary schools, as the worry and anxiety mixed up with it, that do mischief and induce the ailments which I shall presently describe.

The Examination Fever.

It is the "examination fever," as it has been called, that leaves such unpleasant sequelæ behind it, and that fever is now endemic in the metropolis. It scorches through now one school and now another, but it is ever in our midst. Examinations, instead of being tests of school work, have become to a great extent its one aim and guiding principle, and whatever educational fruits they may have yielded, they are producing, I am confident, a rich crop of nervousness. I am assured that a thrill of anxiety runs through each school as the annual audit approaches, and that knots of children, nine and ten years old, may be found standing in the playground, neglecting hop-scotch and skipping-rope, and speculating like precocious gamblers on their chances of passing, and the questions that are likely to be asked them. The supernatural terrors of the past have given place to dread of the School Board. The insatiable lip that would curl with contempt at any reference to a witch or a ghost, quivers with anxiety at the name of a Government inspector, and the examination day has appropriated to itself much of the foreboding which used to be reserved for the day of judgment. This is an unhealthy moral atmosphere for children, and a phase of over-pressure that must not be overlooked, and that involves very large numbers.

Half-starved Children.

There are in elementary schools in the poorer districts of London a large number of half-starved children. In one of the Board schools in Clerkenwell, Mr. Marchant Williams found on the day of his annual inspection that 36 per cent. of the parents of the children were out of employment, that 40 per cent. of the children came to school sometimes without a breakfast, and 28 per cent. came sometimes to afternoon school without any dinner. My school visits were made at a time of the year and in weather when work was not at its scarcest, so that I have come upon nothing as bad as this; but in all the schools inspected cases of pinching have been pointed out to me, while in some the ravages of starvation have been patent enough. In one school, and that by no means the worst as regards the condition of the children, in which 476 were examined, 129 of these were pointed out to me as being half-starved, and their faces gave doleful confirmation of the fact, while fifteen declared that they had had no food that morning. Those who announced that they were breakfastless were all boys, and I was told, and satisfied myself, that it was useless to put questions on that subject to the girls, who are too sensitive to acknowledge *res angustæ domi* before their

In its leading article (which surely must have been written by some Jesuitical enemy of the Church Association, who has contrived to worm himself into the confidence of the editor), the *Rock* prophesies as follows:—

"The Parliamentary consideration of the Disestablishment question cannot much longer be deferred. The powers that be are subjected to pressure they will probably be unable, and possibly unwilling, much longer to resist. They will be able, too, with some show of justice, to claim that their action in this matter has been partly prompted by a desire to meet the wishes of many within the pale of the Church itself. If, however, Churchmen can but unite for defence, the issue will never be in doubt. But if the House be divided against itself, its days are numbered. Are loyal Churchmen preparing themselves for the contingency? Are they definitely fixing in their own minds the grounds on which their action shall be based, and resolving, possibly, upon some little self-sacrifice, in order to secure the general welfare of our Church? Or are they preparing the way, by supineness and persistent bickering, for a crushing defeat and merciless spoliation? That all parties in the Church should unite against a common foe requires no sacrifice of principle, no tacit recognition of wrong, no acceptance by one of the other's sentiments or practice. Let it not be said that the Evangelical party were ever averse to a concert which might have averted the evil day."

"A Daniel come to judgment! yea a Daniel!" If that is not a crushing condemnation of the policy of the Church Association, I know not where to look for one.—I am, Sir, &c.,

ALFRED PLUMMER.

University College, Durham, January 14th.

PAMPHLETS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Your remark that "the days of pamphlets seem to be over," if not altogether true, is nearly so. A "burning" question, however, now and again revives the pamphlet form of publication. The Bank Act of 1844, the Bankruptcy Act of 1869, and recently the Suez-Canal question, have offered opportunities for the appearance of not a few pamphlets on these subjects, especially the two former. In the case of the first of these, whenever there has been a monetary crisis, out has come a swarm of pamphlets of the most stinging kind, followed by another swarm vindicating that measure, along with endeavours to allay the wounded feelings of their opponents. Lectures, addresses, and speeches, and the facilities afforded by the Press for their wide-spread circulation, have taken the place, perhaps, of the pamphlet.

Ireland affords a singular and not uninteresting example of how largely the pamphlet was resorted to formerly there. Mr. Charles Halliday, a merchant of Dublin, a director of the Bank of Ireland and honorary secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, who died in 1866, was an ardent book collector. His collection of books, pamphlets, and broadsides connected with Ireland was perhaps the finest in the kingdom. His widow, in 1867, presented it to the Royal Irish Academy. It consisted of 29,000 pamphlets relating to Ireland, of which 21,997 were bound up in 2,211 volumes octavo, and 700 were quartos, unbound. The extent of this priceless collection can be seen and judged of by the literary world, and it is kept by the Academy as a separate library, out of honour to the name and memory of the donor.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Liverpool, January 14th.

WILLIAM BLOOD.

ARE DOGS COLOUR-BLIND?

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Your correspondents have been discussing whether dogs are colour-blind. Let me give you an instance which shows they are not. Once, when I was at Trient, I saw a poor little dog, like a fox-terrier, which had been dyed a bright magenta colour. He was running about and trying to make acquaintance with the other dogs, but none of them would have anything to say to him. I think this shows they could clearly distinguish colour.—I am, Sir, &c.,

M. L. S.

DEVONSHIRE VERNACULAR.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—In p. 58, article "John Herring," is this phrase, "Devonshire savages to whom the author has given the name of the 'Cobble-dicks,'" &c. The name itself was originally, doubtless, a nickname, either to some "Dick of the Coble," or, may be, some "Cobble-dick." Be this as it may, the name is common both in Cornwall as well as Devon, and is borne by respectable persons, principally farmers.

The author of "Mehalah" has inadvertently given some pain, doubtless, in giving the Devonshire savages (?) the generic

surname he has chosen. Pray excuse my troubling you with this reference to what, after all, is a mere bagatelle.—I am, Sir, &c.,

J. H. NANKIVELL.

South Cliffe Hotel, near Christchurch, Hants, January 16th.

HOME LESSONS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—May I beg you to allow me, through your valuable paper, to make an earnest appeal for subscriptions, in order to carry on a case to test the legality of compulsory home lessons? The case was lately brought before the Bradford Magistrates, and dismissed by them as frivolous; but on an appeal being made to the Court of Queen's Bench, Mr. Justice Stephen and Lord Coleridge both expressed their opinion that the case was of importance, as affecting the interests of a large number of the poorer class of parents.

The evils of compulsory home-work, imposed contrary to the judgment of the master or the wishes of the parent, on children in some cases as young as five, without regard to health, capacity, or the necessities of parents, to say nothing of there being often no place for study in the over-crowded dwellings of the poor, are being felt much in many parts of the country.

Section 9 of the Education Acts provides that a parent may employ his child in any way he thinks fit, provided the child attend school during the hours that school is open; but children are often severely punished if, in obeying the commands of their parents, they neglect the home lesson set by the master. Surely, this must be seen to be an unsatisfactory state of things; and it is in the hope of getting a definite legal decision on this point, that I venture to beg for subscriptions on behalf of the working-people who are taking the matter up.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add that we have eminent medical testimony to the evil effects of these long hours of work on young children (often thirty-seven or forty per week), as well as that of some of the best and most experienced masters; and to say that those who are kind enough to contribute to the expenses will receive the sincere gratitude of numbers of parents who are anxious to give their children all the educational advantages possible, but who condemn these long, compulsory hours.—I am, Sir, &c.,

EDITH LUPTON,

Member of the Bradford School Board.

P.S.—Mr. R. Newton Rhodes, solicitor, Sunbridge Chambers, Bradford, has kindly consented to receive subscriptions; which may also be sent to Miss Lupton, Claremont Studio, St. Mary's Terrace, Paddington, W.

ART.

THE OLD MASTERS AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

(MR. POOLE'S PAINTING.)

THE chief attraction of this winter's collection of the works of deceased artists at Burlington House is the selection from the works of the late Academician, William Poole. This painter had rather a curious reputation in his life-time; probably his work puzzled the public, from its unlikeness to the general run of the pictures with which it was shown. Briefly speaking, the pictures which are annually exhibited at the Royal Academy consist of three classes,—one of costume, one of domestic sentiment, and one of more or less realistic landscape; and to none of these did Poole belong. He was a survivor of the old times, when there were "high" art and "low" art, and his work smacked much of the style of Maclise and Etty. We hope that none of our readers will imagine that in saying this we intend to suggest any likeness between the work of these masters, of whom one was probably the worst colourist (for a painter of any repute) that the English school has ever had; and the second was one of the best. But Mr. Poole's work in some ways combined the traditions of both men. He looked at his subjects in a way which combined realism and tradition, and in his earlier days it is probable that he directly imitated Maclise. The picture of "Solomon Eagle Preaching during the Plague of London" reminds us strongly of the manner in which Maclise would have treated the same subject, and there is about the various figures that strange lack of individuality and life, that dressed-up, correctly-posed appearance which was a noticeable characteristic of much of Maclise's historical painting. This, and the large painting illustrating one of the trials of Job's patience, which was exhibited seven years afterwards (1843 and 1850), is much the lowest point of merit in Mr.

the stomachs of the consumers. Mr. Biggar, the Irish M.P., has, not without reason, complained of the deleterious effects of this bad (not malt) whisky, so largely imported from Scotland into Ireland. The Scotch would prefer all their whisky to be kept in bond for two years, under Inland-Revenue seals, before it is retailed. The retail price, of course, must be raised, to compensate for interest on locked-up capital. But the saving in the lunacy and criminal rates to the pockets of the rate-payers would be immense, as it is computed that in the course of twenty-four months the fusil oil vanishes, and its deleterious powers vanish likewise.

Then, again, there is the iniquitous and persecuting system of two or three irresponsible clerks at Whitehall, who are always sending threatening letters to poor Scotch lairds, for Crown dues, Crown Teinds, &c., which, from the bad manner in which these accounts at Whitehall are kept, they have neglected to look into for some forty or fifty years, either there or at the Crown Rents' Office in Edinburgh. But the persecuting interference comes from the Office of her Majesty's Woods and Forests, in Whitehall Place, who claim all exemption from Treasury supervision.

One more grievance, and I have done; the mode in which all Liberal Scotch Peers are prevented by the Act of Union from sitting in the House of Commons,—and, by the union of English (as well as Scotch) Tory Peers, are hindered from being elected Representative Peers. The real remedy for this latter grievance is mentioned in Sir Erskine May's "Constitutional History." That able author suggests the calling up to the House of Peers of the very few remaining Scotch Peers, as well as the Irish Peers up to 1707, the date of the Scottish Union.—I am, Sir, &c.,

AULD REEKIE.

EDUCATION AND THE RURAL FRANCHISE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—The article in the current number of the *Spectator* on Mr. Mundella's speech at Glasgow on the rural franchise, and its future bearings on the Rural Education Act, will be read with interest by many rural school managers. It is one of those, who has long been familiar with the management of small country schools in a district bordering on one of our great coalfields, where rural wages are abnormally high, that now ventures to bring forward some considerations on the working of the Education Act.

And in considering the probable opinion of the rural folks regarding the Act, it is well to remember how education was regarded before that Act was passed, for in many rural parishes excellent schools were then already to be found where a good education was supplied to the population at the expense of the squire, the parson, or other wealthy persons who took interest in the people. The teaching in many of these schools was fully equal to that now given by the Board schools, except that no "extra subjects" beyond needlework were taught; but the results were not equally satisfactory, because there was no power by which managers could compel attendance. No compulsion was used, but the strongest persuasion was generally brought to bear, in order to encourage good attendance, and ensure a high grant from Government. Indeed, a good deal of mild bribery took place, in the form of attendance-rewards, school pence returned, school treats, &c. Now, how did the people regard these schools? Doubtless they were highly valued by a large proportion of the population, for they cost the people nothing beyond the penny or twopenny weekly charged for each child. The managers would always find certain families in the parish regular attendants at school, and such were always the children of the more industrious and intelligent labourers or the country artisans. The small farmers generally sent their children very irregularly to school during the spring, summer, and early autumn, their work being valuable about the house and farm; and the lower and more unthrifty class of labourers could never be persuaded to regular attendance by any form of persuasion, one main cause of irregularity being an unthrifty or sickly house-mother, who would not start the little ones, duly provided with their dinner, in good time for school. Those labourers who sent their children regularly to school did so in the hope that their education would enable them to rise in life,—to better themselves. And these children have very generally done so, whilst those who had been irregular attendants, and were consequently imperfectly educated, have generally remained in the class to which they were born, whether labourers or farmers.

The Education Act did not excite much opposition in the rural districts till the compulsory clauses were put in force and since that time education has certainly declined in popularity both with farmers and labourers. The farmers cannot hire a boy to lead horses, pick stones, scare crows, or any of the other light occasional jobs so plentiful on a farm; the labourers miss the wages of the boys, which in this district would never be less than ninepence a day for a boy of eleven or twelve, or a shilling a week and three good meals a day (no small consideration, to a growing boy). Then the cottage house-wife detests having to do all her own work, instead of being able to keep one or more of the elder children at home to help her, whenever she might please, to nurse the baby, fetch water, pick sticks, &c. Finally, many of the better class of labourers think that when every one is compulsorily educated, their children will lose the advantage which they had gained for them by their self-denial. It is possible that the next generation may see a considerable reaction against education—as represented by school work—for the great aim of the working-classes has been to raise their children above manual labour by education. But when Mr. Mundella's task is done, and every one can read and write, there will no longer be the artificial inequality caused by unequal education, natural ability will again assert its full supremacy, and "scholars" who can read, write, and sum will have to plough, and hedge, and cart muck again. Still, it is difficult to believe that the world will recede in this respect. Education is a real benefit to a man, whatever his occupation may be; but if a serious reaction should ever take place against it, it will arise from forcing it too fast down unwilling throats.

Where the way has been paved by a well-managed "National school," the compulsory clauses are already regarded as no great hardship, for by their aid the managers have generally succeeded in doubling the attendance, with the pleasing result of passing the children through the terrible Standard V. at eleven years old, or twelve at the latest. Then the farmer gets his bird-boy, the labourer gets the boy's summer wages (sending him back to school for three or five months in winter), and the mother gets a daughter in reasonable time, though, indeed, she would have been glad of a nurse for the baby two years sooner. But where a neglected agricultural district sets up a new Board school, it is generally badly managed by illiterate (though shrewd) small farmers unfriendly to the Act. There the school inspector should visit with impossible frequency, to compel a good attendance, for the majority of the population will be against it. The children are *always* sick, or the weather too wet, or they are "wanted" at home on three days out of five, or they are doing stray days of work for neighbours, and no one will give information about the matter, although every one knows it to be illegal, and the employer will frequently be a member of the School Board! The consequence is no grant, and the schoolmaster changed yearly, and the school-rate exorbitantly high. Such a district might be relied on to vote as one man for a reduction of the standard to No. III. If such considerations have force even in a district where no able-bodied man gets less than fifteen shillings a week, if employed by the year, or a much higher rate of pay if employed by the day or the week; where no woman does any field labour whatever (with the exception of a few Irish women quartered in the towns, who will get as much as 3s. a day at harvest work), and where boy-labour consequently fetches an unusually high price, what may be expected in districts less wealthy and less intelligent? If the labourer were at present polled on the subject, it is probable that, in the southern and western counties, at least, he would vote for "no compulsion" by a small majority, and the farmers to a man would go against the Act as a whole, and return to the voluntary system. But it is likely that the labourer, when he gets the franchise, will be guided by *some one* in whom he will have more confidence than the farmer,—by the squire, the parson, or the Dissenting minister; and as these will all be found on the side of education, the compulsory clauses may survive.—I am, Sir, &c., N.

HOME LESSONS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Can Miss Lupton and her friends seriously suppose that they are doing the poor a service by inviting parents to join in a crusade against home lessons? Such lessons are in universal and beneficial use in all secondary and higher schools in England, and prevail also throughout the primary schools of France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and the United States. The

practice has scarcely been prevalent to the same extent in the Elementary Schools of England, but it has long been common in the best of them; it is increasing, and until now has never aroused any opposition. As one who has had a very large experience of public elementary-school work in England, I desire to testify that such lessons are generally very popular with parents, that they have a very useful effect in making the school work more real and more interesting, and that there is no evidence whatever of any evil results to the health, or to the popularity, or the usefulness of the schools in which the practice has been adopted.

No doubt, exceptional cases arise in the elementary schools, as in all places of instruction, from the Universities downwards, in which teachers are rather too exacting, or in which the scholar is weak or over-anxious. These cases, so far as elementary schools are concerned, are extremely rare, and have been grossly exaggerated. But the danger is to be met by reasonable watchfulness on the part of school managers, parents, and teachers; and by giving such relief in the particular case as may seem to be required; not by lowering the standard of education, which is already far from high, throughout the whole country. There is probably not a body of school managers in England who would not willingly remit the home tasks, if any instance was properly brought before them of a child who was either out of health, or engaged in manual work out of school, or otherwise unable to perform them. An appeal to the law for such a purpose is wholly unnecessary. More than this, it is likely to prove extremely mischievous, for it will encourage the less thoughtful and self-respecting parents in the belief that the legal minimum of instruction is all that their children ought to receive; and it will seriously weaken the legitimate authority of teachers and school managers.

Here is an extract from a recently published official letter addressed by the Education Department to the Secretary of the National Union of Elementary Teachers:—

"In regard to home lessons, my Lords see no reason to modify the view which has already been expressed in paragraph 32 of the 'Instructions to Inspectors' (Circular of August 9th, 1882). For delicate or very young children, such lessons are plainly unsuitable; and the special circumstances of some schools render it inexpedient to require home tasks in any form. Of such circumstances the local managers are the best judges. But in the upper classes of good schools, in which the teachers exert a right influence, and take an interest in their work, the practice of giving short exercises to be performed at home is attended with no difficulty, and is open to no practical objection. The best teachers use such exercises rather to illustrate and to fix in the memory lessons which have already been explained in school, than to break new ground, or to call for new mental effort. This purpose is served by lessons of a very simple and definite character,—a sum, a verse of poetry, a list of names or dates, a letter, an outline map, a short parsing exercise, which may readily be prepared in half an hour, and which admits of very easy testing and correction on the following day. When these conditions are fulfilled, the home task is found to have a very valuable effect, not only in helping the progress of the scholar and in encouraging the habit of application, but also in awakening, on the part of the parents, an interest in the school work."

And the Secretary of the National Union, in replying to this letter on behalf of the Teachers, said:—

"With their Lordships' opinions on home lessons, teachers generally may be expected to coincide, for they seem most fair and reasonable."

Thus, it seems that the Department, and its Inspectors, and the teachers, all of whom, at least, know intimately the state of the schools and the sort of life the children actually lead, are agreed as to the considerate and proper use of home lessons. The more intelligent and respectable of the parents—a class happily increasing in number every day—know their own interests too well to respond to any such appeal as is now made to them. They are no true friends of the poor who seek to represent home lessons as a grievance. I suspect that if some one in a higher social position were to invite Miss Lupton and Mr. Rhodes to limit the education of children of their own class to the humblest rudiments, and were to counsel them not to permit any reading or preparation out of school, the advice would certainly not be welcomed, and might even be resented.—I am, Sir, &c.,

ALPHA.

WHAT DOES MR. GEORGE WANT?

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—In your notice of Mr. George's proposal, I read,—"There is absolutely no hope in the scheme, unless reduced to an ordinary land-tax, which might, no doubt, reduce other taxation, but which, as leaving private property in the soil intact, could

be considered by Mr. George too despicable a compromise to discuss." May I, as a member of the Committee of the Land Reform Union, be allowed to say in your valuable journal that this is just the compromise that I hope to see carried out; and that, so far from its being "too despicable" for Mr. George to discuss, it is what he advocates in "Progress and Poverty," wherein he desires to leave "private property in the soil intact." Let me quote his own words, from Book viii., "Application of the Remedy," chap. ii.:—"I do not propose either to purchase or to confiscate private property in land." "By leaving to landowners a per-centage of rent, which would probably be much less than the cost and loss involved in attempting to rent lands through State agency, and by making use of this existing machinery, we may, without jar or shock, assert the common right to land by taking rent for public use." "Now, inasmuch as the taxation of rent, or land values, must necessarily be increased just as we abolish other taxes, we may put the proposition into practical form by proposing to abolish all taxation save that upon land values." I frankly admit there is no doubt that Mr. George would desire the Government to take a larger portion of ground-rent as taxation than you would think well, but the difference is merely one of degree; and personally I should be willing, and perhaps Mr. George would, too, to accept a "compromise," and see what effect that would have towards removing extreme poverty.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Hatherop, Bournemouth West.

ALFRED HOOD,

A Member of the Land Reform Union.

[What is the difference between a tax on income derived from land, and a tax on land? The income is taxed. It ought, perhaps, to be taxed more heavily because it is heritable, and earned income is not, but then so ought income from Consols. The question is much more complicated than our correspondent supposes, and the amount obtainable much less. Land already bears the local taxes, which rise and rise.—Ed. Spectator.]

INDEPENDENCE FOR IRELAND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—In the *Spectator* of the 12th inst. you suggested, in referring to Sir Wilfrid Lawson's speech on Home-rule, that the first effect of Irish independence might be civil war in Ireland. Recent events in the North of Ireland ought to make this quite obvious to all, but it has always been so to those who know Ireland, and can view the situation without excited hopes.

Home-rule would be giving Ireland up to an ignorant democracy, in that state of excitement in which the most violent counsels are the most certain to be followed. The magistracy would be made elective, as it has been in some parts of America, and impartiality would be the last qualification for the magistracy that the electors would think of. The results of an elective magistracy in America are not encouraging, but what would they be in a country divided by religious sects who regard war between them as their normal state?—I am, Sir, &c.,

Delfast, January 22nd.

JOSEPH JOHN MURPHY.

THE HAPPINESS OF WOMEN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—In your late papers on the "Happiness" or "Unhappiness" of women, is there not one omission,—that happiness is not an external, but internal thing? Like the "Kingdom of Heaven," it is *within us*.^{*} Many persons, under most untoward fate, are seen to lead very happy lives; while there are others whom no amount of blessings ever makes either thankful or contented. They are always creating for themselves a grief or a wrong, the present is to them worthless till it becomes the past, and then they waste their lives in vainly regretting it. We have all known, even in good women, that "unhappy disposition," which, far more than any outward circumstances, makes the true misery of life.

Another cause of unhappiness in women—I mean in those fighting with real misfortunes—is their cowardice. Brought up to consider not merely right and wrong, but many secondary things—the opinion of the world, of their friends and relations—and, as one of your writers truly observes, weighed down by their own morbid consciences, they submit tamely to evils from which a firm and persistent will would soon have freed them. Many an act which looks like self-sacrifice is, at the core, mere weakness, fear of the world, of the anger or annoyance of

^{*} True, in the highest sense, but try a day of toothache.—Ed. Spectator.]

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the sympathy which has this week been expressed all over England by every demonstration of Protestant Christians with Mr. Spurgeon. He is nearer the people, they may rely on it, than either Mr. Matthew Arnold or Mr. Bradlaugh.

HOME-LESSONS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. MUNDELLA, in moving the Education Estimates on Monday, was well entitled to take credit "for the progress all along the line" which his department has made during the past year. But if the decision given in the Queen's Bench Division the same day is not overruled by legislation or evaded by administrative ingenuity, it is greatly to be feared that the progress all along the line will be made appreciably slower, if not checked altogether. The decision given by Justices Matthew and Day was to the effect that the learning lessons out of school could not be enforced. The case arose at Bradford. The people of Bradford, a place naturally identified through its connection with Mr. Forster with the idea of educational progress, very properly wish to make their schools as efficient as possible. The "truest test of educational progress," as Mr. Mundella said, "is to be found in two things,—in the increase in the average attendance and in the increase in the number presented for examination in the higher standards." An increase in the average attendance may perhaps take place without resort to work out of school-hours. But it is almost impossible that any marked increase in the number of those who pass the higher standards can take place if the work is to be entirely confined to school-hours. The Bradford School Board, therefore, like many other School Boards, and like the authorities of all schools worthy of the name, endeavours to induce the scholars in its schools to do work in the shape of preparing lessons at home. It is not to be expected that all children should be possessed by such a burning desire for educational advantages as to learn their lessons at home without some pressure, and pressure is accordingly applied, by giving half-an-hour's extra school to those who have failed to prepare their lessons at home. According to Mr. Justice Matthew this detention is illegal and constitutes an assault. The Bradford Justices had held that no assault had been committed, "but the Education Acts," said Mr. Justice Matthew, "being an interference with the liberty of the subject, must as such be construed strictly;" and neither the Education Acts nor the bye-laws gave power to the master to order the child to do lessons at home; and it followed that "the child had been punished for not doing that which the master had no power to order him to do," and the detention was illegal. It was unfortunate that the Bradford School Board did not appear on the argument of the case, or they might have urged that as the Education Acts merely enforce a legal duty on the parents for the benefit of the children, they are not to be construed with the fierce technicality of penal statutes; and that there is an implied power in the Board and its agents to enforce that duty in all reasonable and proper ways. However, thus the decision is, and it is one which would justify not only an indictment for assault, but an action to recover damages for false imprisonment. It is to be hoped that some parent who "don't see the use of this learning and stuff," aided and abetted by those who do see the use of it for themselves in the means it gives them of cheating the lower classes, will be moved to bring an action for false imprisonment, that the case may be taken to a higher Court, where it will be dealt with in a more liberal spirit, and on broader grounds. It is stated, indeed, that the School Board at Bradford have already decided to adopt an ingenious method of obtaining their object, by passing a bye-law to the effect that the ordinary school time shall be from 9 to 12 a.m., and from 2 to 4.30 p.m.; but "for those whose home-lessons have not been duly prepared, it shall be extended to 12.30 p.m. in the earlier part of the day or to 5 p.m. in the later, at the discretion of the head teacher, the extra thirty minutes being spent under the superintendence of a teacher in learning the home-lessons." As it is clearly desirable that when reasonably practicable some lessons should be learnt at home, instead of in the din of school, and that the children should not be left wholly without mental employment out of school-hours, it is to be hoped that the device may be successful. The system of home-lessons has been adopted by the London School Board without any general ill-results. Not a single case of serious illness from over-pressure has been proved, though if such cases had existed it should surely be easy enough to produce them, and certainly none have been traced to home-lessons. After all, School Boards and schoolmasters

are human, and the majority of them are possessed at least of average discretion and reasoning power, if not of something over the average. The London School Board, for instance, instructs its teachers not to insist on home-lessons with children of delicate health, or with what might be called "impossible" homes, nor, as a rule, when the parents object to home-lessons. But to give the parents an absolute veto on home-lessons, as the decision of Mr. Justice Matthew tends to do, is to transfer the direction of education and management of schools from the Board and its teachers, specially elected or selected for the purpose, to the casual irresponsible individual, and to upset the Education Acts. So far as over-pressure has existed at all in connection with Board Schools, it has been in the case of pupil teachers, an institution which grew to diseased proportions (owing to the outcry for economy which was chiefly another manifestation of the hatred of education), but which is now being successfully curtailed, and will soon be almost reformed out of existence. Which is the worst over-pressure, the sending children out in all weathers to agricultural and street labour of an exhausting or injurious character, or the keeping them employed at home in the elevating occupation of easy tasks proved by wide experience to be generally within their strength? Mr. Mundella says that constant complaints reach him from the clergy of the early age at which the children are taken from school, and the lowness of the standards which they pass. Home-lessons can be made to furnish at least a partial remedy for this state of things. Without them there is little hope of our reaching the excellence of Germany, where the average attendance is 95 per cent. against our 73, and where no child may be employed till fourteen years old, and must, even when he has left school, attend night schools till sixteen, instead of passing out of school at the age of ten, knowing nothing but the "Three R's," and those imperfectly. The system of home-lessons, like every other part of the educational system, must be worked with discretion,—perhaps, indeed, it needs more than ordinary discretion,—but it is essential to educational progress, and needs not curtailment but development. If by a narrow construction of the law the new Bradford bye-law should meet with the condemnation of the Queen's Bench Division, as *ultra vires*, some other means must be devised of getting over the difficulty, or recourse must be had to fresh legislation. The country clearly does not suffer from over-pressure in education, but from under-pressure. The educational engine at present only works half-time and half-power. It should not be in the power of a recalcitrant parent to turn off steam at pleasure.

BISHOP MAGEE ON THE ETHICS OF FORGIVENESS.

"DO you not see," says the Bishop of Peterborough, in the course of an Oxford University sermon on the Ethics of Forgiveness, which we criticised three years ago in these columns, and which he has just republished,—and with important extensions if we are not mistaken,—in the remarkable volume called "The Gospel and the Age,"—"Do you not see that all this magniloquent and windy talk about a merciful and compassionate God, so facile and easy in His forgiveness, is a mere conception of modern Theism?—that it is, after all, the poorest and lowest idea we can form of God? that it does not rise above the low thought of the savage, which pictures Him merely as an angry and offended man? Rise but one degree above that, rise up in your thought to the idea of Him as the judge of all the earth; rise one degree higher to the idea of Him as the author and controller of the moral universe, and all this talk about easy, good-natured forgiveness vanishes in your nobler but more awful conceptions of God, as the cloud-wreath vanishes at the rising of the sun?" Now, we can imagine that passage having been written with a drift with which we should heartily agree, and we believed at the time the sermon was first published by a Missionary Society which hoped, by the help of it, to remove some of the difficulties which stand in the way of the reception of the Christian doctrine of the atonement, that the drift of the Bishop was one with which, in the main, we did agree. But that hope is greatly diminished by the form in which the sermon is now republished, and we fear that the Bishop's sermon will do more to throw new difficulties in the way of the understanding of the Christian doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ, than to remove any. What the Bishop seems to be aiming at is not to show how great, how infinite almost, is the difficulty of moving man to a true abhorrence of sin, and of reconciling him

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Paris, who was put on his trial for alleged disrespect to Royalty in some articles which certainly, it must be admitted, did not do honour to his good-taste. A few days after it was rumoured that the King would arrive in Christiania, with a view to try a compromise. To the surprise of all—indeed, it remains still a mystery to the public how this change in the Royal mind has been brought about—this proved to be true. On his arrival, the King entered into communication with Professor Dr. O. T. Broch, who is to form the new Ministry, and through him a compromise has been brought about with T. Sverdrup, the Leader of the Opposition, of which the chief points are the following:—The Bill admitting the Ministers to the sittings of the Storting is to be passed again in a somewhat altered form, and then to obtain the Royal sanction. Thus the famous resolution of June 9th, 1881, by which the Storting rashly declared this thrice-carried Bill valid law, and thus intruded upon the Crown's privilege, has virtually been admitted to be "a blow in the air," and the point in dispute concerning the absolute veto has been evaded. Some minor Bills, which had not been sanctioned by the late Government, are to be acceded to by the new one. And thirdly, a new Ministry is to be formed on Liberal principles, into which two of the leading men of the Opposition are to be admitted. It is characteristic of the democratic spirit of our society that one of these latter is a poor peasant, who has lived in the country as a petty tradesman. As a member of the Storting he has gradually, without possessing any of the outward gifts of a public orator, by the mere force of his ability—chiefly in the financial line—and by superior judgment, risen to be a man of leading influence in the Storting. The new Premier, Dr. Broch, was ten years ago a member of Stang's Ministry; but, disagreeing with his colleagues in the matter of the Ministers' Admission Bill, he resigned, and has since chiefly resided at Paris, as a delegate to the International Metre Commission, whose President he has had the honour of being. Among the other names are those of Mr. Sibbern and Mr. Richter, our Consuls-General at Paris and London. Several of them belong to the older Liberal group, and played a prominent part in the Storting some years ago; but not going far enough in the hot strife of later years, they were ousted, and have remained since, holding important offices, in retirement, abiding their time. Two of the late Ministry have also come to an agreement with Mr. Broch, and are to remain in office.

The little knot of the Intransigent Right who for so long time have had the Royal ear have, of course, made the most frantic exertions to frustrate the compromise, or "capitulation," as they term it. Indeed, they seem to have been able to keep the matter in suspense now for nearly a fortnight, and they must have made of it a hard time to his Majesty; but the telegrams tell us that the compromise is *un fait accompli*, and that only a Minister for the Church is still wanting. This will, it is confidently hoped, extricate us from the political deadlock, and inaugurate a new era of Constitutional government, fruitful of beneficent reforms. It is already said that Mr. Broch and the Storting have come to an agreement about the extension of the suffrage, a new organisation of the Army, and the Jury system.—I am, Sir, &c., T.

[The King has gone still further, according to the latest accounts, and has made Mr. Sverdrup Premier.—*Ed. Spectator.*]

THE MID-SURREY ELECTION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—The attitude of the country towards the Government is practically the same as at the General Election. Such was the moral of the Lincoln election, and such is the moral of the bye-election in Mid-Surrey. Both parties hoped to improve their position at the poll, but the result is a Conservative majority exactly the same as in 1880. I was in the thick of the fight, and had many opportunities of gauging the feeling of the constituency in the more populous districts. I think I am right in saying:—

1. The Egyptian question has made little impression on the popular mind; there is no Jingo feeling among the masses. Even General Gordon's name failed to awaken enthusiasm; when a Conservative speaker tried to use it with effect, he only elicited a reply,—"He is off his head."

2. The Liberal leaders are still strong in the confidence of their supporters; but the Conservative party have no leaders whose names are rallying words. Sir Stafford Northcote's name was never heard, Lord Randolph Churchill's caused laughter, and Lord Salisbury's was received in a curiously

doubtful way. The only name which called forth hearty cheering from the Conservatives was Lord Beaconsfield's.

3. There was a general acquiescence in the County Franchise Bill; the Tories did not oppose it, the Liberals heartily accepted it.

4. The electors are not exacting as regards redistribution,—that they look upon as certain, and the details they leave to experts.

5. There is, especially among the smaller tradesmen and a section of the working classes, a hankering after reciprocity or some such modification of our Free-trade policy. There seems to be more danger in this direction than our serious politicians imagine. It will need to be dealt with.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Incheolm, Upper Richmond Road, Putney. JOHN BELL.

MR. SPURGEON AND THE MIDDLE-CLASS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—You crown your sum-up of the middle-class appreciation of Mr. Spurgeon with,—“They let him talk English instead of Pulpit without any audible protest.” Allow me, as a middle-class person, to protest that the one sole cause of Mr. Spurgeon's success as a preacher has always appeared to me the simple fact that he talks English, and that he believes in what he talks about, which it seems to me no one ever did or could believe, who would talk about it such intolerably agonising twaddle as that you dignify by the term “Pulpit.” I do not mean to accuse of wilful hypocrisy a large body of exceptionally respectable men; but it does appear to me that they deceive themselves,—that they wish to believe in Christianity on the side of its comfortable promises, but that they wish not to believe it on the side of its inconvenient precepts; and the effort to keep for themselves and present to their congregations the pleasant assurances of Christianity, whilst they ignore its (in their opinion) impracticable precepts, results in such unreal twaddle as to any truthful, earnest soul is simply agonising torture. And it seems to me that congregations only sit and endure these false, make-believe exhortations because they also want only to comfort themselves with Christianity, are only too glad that the clergyman or minister does not insist on its very inconvenient virtues. And the utter indifference to Christianity of the greater bulk of working-men arises from this,—that such unreality is quite intolerable to men who toil and suffer in the hard, stern realities of life.

And the spread of infidelity, for it does spread, appears to me to be caused, not so much by scientific doubt, nor by solvent Biblical criticism, nor by active atheistical propaganda, nor by any one thing at all so much as by this hateful, intolerable, unendurable inanity,—“Pulpit.”

And I implore you—if, as I hope, you, *Spectator*, are in earnest Christian—publish my letter, though I am both humble and unknown; in the hope, perchance, that some young preacher, not yet stereotyped into dead dullness, may, reading my warning and imploring entreaty, think if it were not better to do as Spurgeon does in this one thing, and “talk English.”—I am, Sir, &c.,

ONE WHO IN SPITE OF “PULPIT” HAS ENDEAVOURED TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

[We entirely agree that clergymen should talk English, and not “Pulpit.” We thought we said so last week, but some of our readers have misread the sentence.—*Ed. Spectator.*]

HOME LESSONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—As in your article on Home Lessons you mention the Bradford School Board, may I be allowed to say that that Board has no intention of evading the law as to home lessons, as laid down in the recent decision in the Court of Queen's Bench, but that they have already issued instructions to their teachers to act in “strict accordance with the decision of the Court.” It seems to me a little unkind in the *Spectator* to urge upon that Board a line of conduct which would inevitably cause their severance from the Electorate before the expiration of another year, should they carry it out. I think also the *Spectator* is not fortunate in referring to the educational progress of Germany as an argument for home lessons, as not only are they not given to young children in that country, but the actual school hours are shorter, which might seem to some people to suggest a connection between educational progress and moderate hours of study.

The real reason of the greater progress made by German children will, I think, however, be found in the fact that

Germany has recognised that a child, to be well educated, must be taught by a trained and efficient teacher; and I think we want a second Swift to add a chapter to the immortal voyage to the Brobdingnags to show the folly of trying to carry on what in apparent sarcasm we call the "great work" of education, by means of police magistrates, attendance officers, and children.

As to the question whether any deaths or cases of illness have occurred from over-pressure, no doubt a powerful Government can suppress all inconvenient medical testimony; but I cannot conclude without commenting on the fact that while neither the nation, nor the parents, school managers, and teachers, who are vitally interested in the matter, are allowed to become acquainted with Dr. Crichton-Browne's report, the Press should be able to comment upon it publicly.—I am, Sir, &c.,

EDITH LUTON,

Member of the Bradford School Board.

Claremont Studio, St. Mary's Terrace, W., June 23rd.

[We have never doubted that for very young children home lessons should not be enforced. We have no doubt that for elder children they often ought to be enforced.—Ed. Spectator.]

A CURIOUS EPITAPH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—The epitaph printed in the *Spectator* of the 14th, on p. 788, reminds me of one in Bakewell churchyard, between Matlock and Buxton, which I give from memory. After the name and date it proceeds:—

"The vocal powers here let us mark,
Of Philip, our late parish clerk.
In church was never heard a layman
With a clearer voice say amen.
The choir lament his vocal tones;
The town—so soon lie here his bones.
Sleep undisturbed beneath the peaceful shrine,
Till angels wake thee with such notes as thine."

I fear some of the lines have dropped out of my recollection.—I am, Sir, &c.

June 23rd, 1884.

M.

POETRY.

ἸΑΤΤΑΡΚΕΙΑ.

I.

By thine own soul's law learn to live,
And if men thwart thee take no heed,
And if men hate thee have no care;
Sing thou thy song, and do thy deed,
Hope thou thy hope, and pray thy prayer,
And claim no crown they will not give,
Nor bays they grudge thee for thy hair.

II.

Keep thou thy soul-sworn steadfast oath,
And to thy heart be true thy heart;
What thy soul teaches learn to know,
And play out thine appointed part;
And thou shalt reap as thou shalt sow,
Nor helped nor hindered in thy growth,
To thy full stature thou shalt grow.

III.

Fix on the future's goal thy face,
And let thy feet be lured to stray
Nowhither, but be swift to run,
And nowhere tarry by the way,
Until at last the end is won,
And thou may'st look back from thy place
And see thy long day's journey done.

PAKENHAM BEATTY.

THE MUDLARK.

"WILL yer sacrifice a copper?" cried an Arab to a Beak,
And the little devil threw a dozen cartwheels as he spoke;
'Twas at the very workhouse gate, this piece of precious cheek,
And the pauper mud-bespattered that magisterial bloke.

That Beak was eke a Guardian: then, as a cat a mouse,
So glared he on the ragged child; with hot official zeal
Enlarged on education, and offered him the House,—
"Won't yer sacrifice a copper?" and he threw another wheel.

No colleague there to tell that Beak what he had best be at!

No wise relieving officer, no master, and no clerk!

Did he do his bounden duty, and quad the beggar brat?

Or sacrifice? Well, History prefers to keep it dark. M.

ART.

GEORGE DU MAURIER.*

WE confess to a certain feeling of irritation with this exhibition, for which Mr. Du Maurier is wholly irresponsible, for it is one caused by the notes of Mr. Henry James which are prefixed to the catalogue. These seventeen pages of panegyric seem to us to be out of place in reference to an exhibition such as the one of which we speak, and they have no critical value to justify their insertion. It may be doubted whether the work of a living artist which is seen in reproductions such as those of *Punch*, is a good subject for collective exhibition; but there is no doubt whatever that, if the exhibition be made, no such literary "padding" is needed as that with which Mr. James has supplied us.

All cultivated Englishmen and Englishwomen have by this time become fully acquainted with the elementary qualities of this artist's work, and it seems, speaking frankly, to be almost an impertinence for an American novelist to tell us what are its characteristics; more especially when he does not seem to have given these characteristics more than the most superficial study. But perhaps the cause of irritation is really not the somewhat exaggerated praise nor the somewhat slight artistic appreciation of the work, but the faint tone of condescension which pervades the preface, which seems, as it were, to disclose a superior being writing for the enlightenment of us dull islanders. When Mr. James tells us, for instance, that "When the name^o Du Maurier is pronounced, I think of grace," we feel inclined to deny this as the self-evident characteristic of the artist, if only for the pleasure of contradicting the egotistical expression. All of which is, no doubt, very wrong; but on the whole not unnatural, for the solemn repetition with Mr. James's personal authority of what we all know would irritate a saint.

However, we must not dwell upon this subject, but speak of the drawings themselves; and the first thing that strikes us is that the exhibition is by no means a complete or satisfactory one. It is not complete, because it includes none of the artist's work except that done for *Punch*, amounting to little more than half his published illustrations, and necessarily only those of a comic and satirical character. It is not satisfactory, because it does not include many of the best even of the *Punch* series. The secret of this may be found in a little note which is prefixed to the enumeration of the drawings:—"All the drawings in the exhibition are for sale. The prices may be obtained on application at the table." The collection is, in fact, composed of those drawings which belong to the artist at the present time, and those are—we will not say inferior, for many of them are first-rate, but, at all events, they are not his most serious, and sometimes not his best work.

We remark the absence, for instance, of a drawing which appeared in *Punch* a year or so ago, and which most of us noticed at the time for its extraordinary ability, representing a host and hostess who, living in the suburbs, have been disappointed of all their guests owing to a thick fog. They are dining together solemnly, one at each end of the long table, footmen and butlers standing along the wall between them. From the artistic point of view, this was, perhaps, the most wonderful drawing which ever appeared in *Punch*, the especial beauty of it being the manner in which the perspective of the long table, and its setting of flowers, glass, and silver, was rendered. One felt the presence of every possible adjunct of a well set-out table, and yet, on examining the drawing carefully, there was the merest suggestion of the object. The ease of draughtsmanship, and the rendering of light and shade on each piece of plate, or glass, or ornament, was literally wonderful. Again, only to speak of those drawings of the artist's that are specially remembered, there are here none of the illustrations to *Esmond*, on the whole probably the finest serious work of Mr. Du Maurier's life; nor those to *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*, nor any of the other *Cornhill* illustrations. There are none of the illustrations to the series of burlesque novels which appeared in *Punch*, nor are there any of the large double-

* Fine-Art Society.

The Times

EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT.

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IS HOMEWORK NECESSARY?

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

At the annual meeting of the Assistant Masters' Association the following resolution was carried:—

While affirming the value and necessity of homework as a means of study free from the restrictions of class work, it should be limited in amount and definitely apportioned among the various subjects. It is good to find a professional body taking official and serious cognizance of the question of homework, for there has been a strong undercurrent of uneasiness among parents (and among boys and girls) about it for some time, an uneasiness which has been manifest on the surface occasionally in sporadic attacks upon homework through the Press, at parents' meetings, and, most vehemently, in private discussions. There seems to be among parents, and others, an impression that the teaching profession is apt to adopt a contemptuous or supercilious attitude whenever any proposals for the abolition or amelioration of homework are mooted, and the Assistant Masters' resolution should reassure them.

The resolution incorporates one of the main props relied upon in any defence of homework. It is, its defenders contend, a valuable and necessary "means of study free from the restrictions of class work." That homework is valuable may, perhaps, be conceded at once, provided (a) that the home conditions are such that the work may be done in comfort and quiet; (b) that class work must of necessity occupy the whole of school hours; and (c) that the child is in good health and is not overburdened with too great or too difficult a task. Whether it can be conceded that it is necessary is quite another question. Is it necessary as an inevitable part of a child's training, or is it necessary simply in order that examinations be passed?

Here we move at once to a second argument advanced in defence of homework by its defenders: that the syllabus for the school certificate examination cannot be covered without its aid. The validity of this argument obviously depends upon the premise that the syllabus for the school certificate examination is beyond the reach of question, a premise few people will be prepared to accept. In their third argument the defenders of homework are upon surer ground, when they declare that in all school work there is a certain amount of repetition and

working of exercises to be done which can well be carried on without supervision, which indeed it would be waste of a teacher's time to supervise. When a teacher has taught and explained, the pupil must practise and memorize if the lesson is to be thoroughly learnt; clearly, a teacher can be of more use teaching elsewhere while this routine, habit-forming work is being done, or, as is the case, let the memorizing and practising be saved for the evenings, so that the whole day can be preserved for the acquisition of new knowledge and skill. Again, there is work of a different type which can be set for home preparation; it is good, say the defenders of homework, that every now and then boys and girls should have problems and new matter demanding initiative and resource to tackle unaided. Here is an opportunity for the training of character; such work demands perseverance, restraint from cinemas, games and other distractions, and the putting forth of concentrated mental effort.

Another argument of a different character is put forward when the defenders of homework suggest that after tea is a suitable time for cerebration. The pupils' powers have flagged as a result of what has been, for them, a long working day, but after the journey home and the stimulating effect of food and drink the mind begins again to work at high pressure, and notably good results will ensue. It might be added also that work returned to after an interval springs more readily to the mind.

The arguments against homework are more numerous, but perhaps for the most part not so general in their application as those advanced in its defence. It is for the reader to decide whether their cumulative effect is greater or less. Psychologists will argue that for growing children a five-and-a-half-hour working day is quite sufficient; socially-minded parents will say that a child's education does not consist entirely of schooling, and that the evenings should be reserved for family intercourse and for

gaining a knowledge of the outside world. This latter argument would be a great deal stronger if all such parents remembered that one of the primary needs of growing children is a long night's sleep. Parents whose children have a long way to travel to and from school may with reason, however, complain that homework prevents them from enjoying the amenities of family life. In poor homes and in homes where there are younger children it is often almost impossible for a boy or girl to find a quiet place in which to work. The mother, who is also the general servant of the home, quite reasonably complains at having to prepare two teas, one for the children, in order that homework may be done before bedtime, and another for the husband when he returns later from work.

But undoubtedly the most serious complaint levelled against homework is that it involves far too great a strain upon delicate, backward, or conscientious children, a strain which in not a few cases entails grave consequences. One need go no farther than a list of extracts from a recent newspaper correspondence to discover such statements as "Homework is a nightly curse in thousands of homes and a cause of nerve trouble, sleeplessness, and family friction." "I calculate that these pupils are tied to their school in one way or another for nearly 70 hours a week." Any teacher who has made anything of a study of homework can supplement these statements from personal experience. External examinations are, of course, at the root of the trouble, and one correspondent puts the case for the parent (and the teacher and the child) succinctly when he says:—"If the examinations are of such a standard that success in them involves several years of systematic overworking, then the proper course is not to pile on the homework, but to work for a complete remodelling of the examination system." Not only does preparation for the school certificate examination (with the consequent requirement of nightly homework) begin in the first year

on many secondary school courses, but it is becoming increasingly the practice to set homework to children of junior school age in order to bring them up to the standard necessary for gaining the coveted free places in secondary schools.

That there is a case for more equitable distribution of homework few will be inclined to deny. Is there a case for its abolition? Are the evil effects of homework greater or less than its advantages? Will an overhaul of the system meet the case, or has the time come for the disappearance of homework altogether? We ought to ask ourselves all these questions, our aim being not the convenience of schools, but the progress and welfare of the children.

The pressure of examinations is an accidental feature, of the utmost importance in a present discussion of homework, but one which evidently it is not impossible to remove. Teaching technique in general is not, and will not be for many years, equal to the task of passing the generality of boys and girls through the school certificate examination at the age of 16 without its aid; in a few rare cases methods may be improved so that it is possible, but these cases will remain the exceptions and not the rule. But suppose examination pressure to be lightened, would there still be danger in homework? Even in existing circumstances it may safely be said that the physical health of most boys is not impaired by it; boys have a very capable spirit of resistance to overpressure, a power of inertia that is equal to most demands. A minority, however, undoubtedly do suffer, and it is notable that the boys who suffer from sleeplessness, sleep-walking and talking, nerves and bad temper, are frequently nowhere near taking the school certificate examination. They are pre-adolescents, or in the early stages of adolescence. Girls admittedly suffer more severely in health than boys from homework, because of their greater conscientiousness and the greater strain of puberty. But both boys and girls, it may be argued—and this is the question which really needs investigation—may suffer mentally and spiritually because of the narrowing effect of concentration upon school tasks, similar to those which have occupied the whole day, when other opportunities of more all-round development are at hand.

New Books

THE MARCH OF MAN. General Editor, LAWRENCE H. DAWSON. The Encyclopaedia Britannica Company, Limited. £2 12s. 6d.

This fine work deserved a less popular title; a sense, indeed, the title is misleading, for the book is a combined historical atlas and volume of history charts, and man through the ages has not always marched either forwards or backwards—the golden ages of nations, and so their ends, have often been a period of standing still.

The scope of the book can best be indicated by quoting its sub-title, in which it is described as "a chronological record of peoples and events from prehistoric times to the present"; comprising a comparative time-chart of universal history in seven sections, an historical atlas of 96 pages, and 64 plates of illustrations. Of these features the picture pages would best have been spared; though the reproductions are good, the serious student who will make use of the atlas may be presumed to know the originals; and the schoolmaster who will value the time-charts would certainly prefer to have 64 pages of classified bibliography. Bibliographies, with some indication of the author's reputation for accuracy as an eye-witness, and for impartiality if a critical historian, are the great need of all students reading history; but this is not a feature in which the book's parent publication, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, has excelled; foreign works of a similar kind have done the same work in a far more exhaustive way.

Of the time-charts (folded and backed with green), which are the distinctive feature of the book, it is difficult to speak too highly; each column consists of a running summary interspersed with dates, ingeniously dovetailed into parallel columns, the countries being distinguished by the coloured ground on which the text appears. Nothing could be simpler to follow, but the student should be grateful to the compilers for the trouble they must have taken to make the tangled story clear. The effect is that of a complex piece of contrived writing, which in the execution appears lucid that the art which went to its making is forgotten by those who hear.

Drama in School. By GEORGE H. HOLROYD, with a Foreword by the late Sir Nigel Playfair and a Preface by F. E. HARRISON, M.C., M.A., Director of Education at Blackpool. Allman and Son. 3s. 6d. Mr. Holroyd emphasizes the growing recognition of educational and cultural value of drama in schools and evening institutes, and his book has been written in the hope that so useful an art may be increasingly

POSTS FOR ANGLO-INDIANS

EDUCATIONAL DIFFICULTIES

In Committee on the Government of India Bill in the House of Commons last week, some hours were given to discussion of the special claims of the Anglo-Indian community to employment in services in which they were in former days indispensable, and to the economic and other difficulties in the way of Anglo-Indian youth obtaining education equal to that open to the children of larger communities.

Last July the Government of India announced new rules for the determination and improvement of the representation of minorities in the public services. It provided that the claims of Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans (then holding rather more than 9 per cent. of the Indian vacancies in the gazetted railway posts, from which recruitment is made on an All-India basis) will be considered when and if their share falls below 9 per cent., while 8 per cent. of the railway subordinate posts filled by direct recruitment will be reserved for the same community. The Joint Select Committee on the India Bill expressed satisfaction with this decision; but suggested that a reference should be included in the Instrument of Instructions of the Governor-General and Governors to the fact that the legitimate interests of minorities include their due representation in the public services. This suggestion has been adopted by Government. In the draft Instrument of Instructions for the Governor of the province he is required "to secure a due proportion of appointments in Our Services to the several communities," and to apply such rules as there may be on the subject at the date of the issue of the instructions "unless he is fully satisfied that modification of that policy is essential in the interests of the communities affected or of the welfare of the public."

Clause 231 of the Bill imposes on the Federal Railway Authority the duty of giving effect "to any instructions which may be issued by the Governor-General for the purpose of securing so far as practicable to each community in India a fair representation in the railway services of the Federation." Sir Reginald Craddock moved an amendment under which the Railway Authority in recruiting posts would be required to have due regard to the past association of the Anglo-Indian community with railway services in India. He pointed out that in the Customs, the railways, posts and telegraphs, and in many posts in the provincial services Anglo-Indians have fulfilled most useful functions with honesty and ability. They are now faced by

SECONDARY SCHOOL NOTES

HOME WORK FOR GIRLS

FROM THE ASSISTANT MISTRESSES' ASSOCIATION

The Assistant Mistresses' Association recently passed a number of resolutions relating to homework. These emphasized the moral and intellectual value attached to independent work, the necessity for cooperation between the school and the home, and the need for experiment with a view to discovering the most effective way of using homework. These resolutions were the outcome of a prolonged consideration by the association's education committee of the replies to a questionnaire sent out to the schools. The returns showed the existence of a bewildering variety of practice, but certain general conclusions could be drawn. It was found, for example, that schools with preparatory departments appeared to be able to demand less from their pupils during adolescence than those without this provision. This is not surprising, for children reared in the preparatory and junior school are not confronted at the age of 11 with the entirely new environment and greatly increased range of subjects which tend to make school life strenuous for many special place holders. Speaking generally it was also found that mixed schools made heavier demands in this respect than single sex schools.

There was, however, nothing to show whether the girl in the mixed school had acquired a little of the boy's ability to deal somewhat lightly with these demands. It was, of course, only possible to estimate the amount of work required in terms of the time spent on it and in this the individual factor must play a large part.

It has been found that periods set aside for supervised preparation in school enable the teachers to train the children to avoid the frittering away of time and to develop in them good habits of work. One school at least has found it profitable to give the younger children such preparation only, and to make a gradual transition to home work, away from school, as they acquire the power of concentration. Difficult home conditions have to be taken into account, and the association looks with sympathetic interest on the many experiments which are being made in providing accommodation at school. If such experiments involve the lengthening of the school day, so far as the staff are concerned, they will have to be carefully watched. Out-of-school activities already call for the expenditure of much energy, and if the supervision of home work is to be added to these there is a danger that the freshness and vigour of the teaching may suffer.

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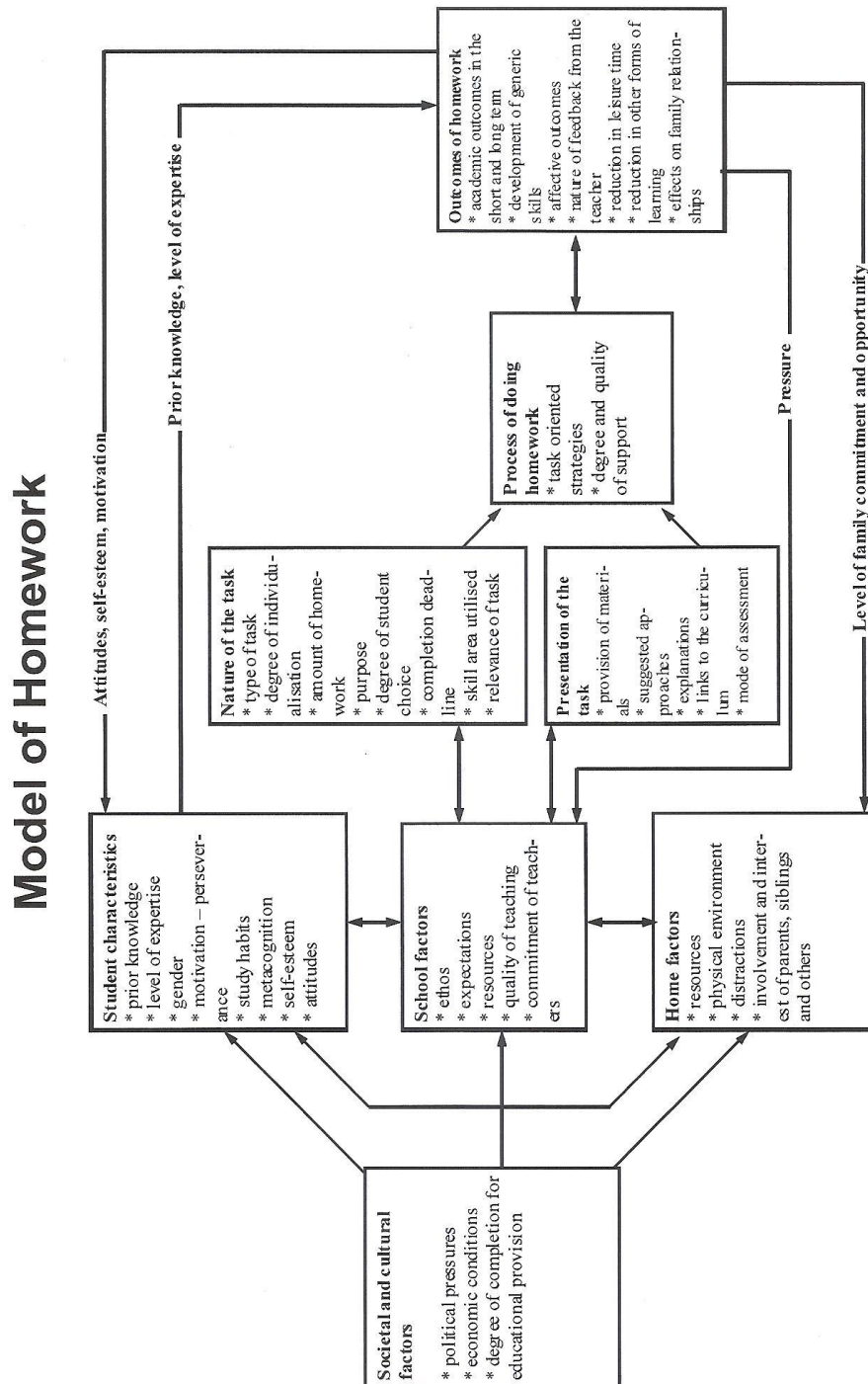
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Appendix 10: Model of Homework



Hallam (2006) Homework: Uses and Abuses

Appendix 11: Perceived Purposes and Disadvantages of Homework

Perceived purposes and advantages of homework	Perceived disadvantages of homework
<p>Homework can promote academic learning by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the amount of time students spend studying • providing opportunities for practice, preparation, and extension work • assisting in the development of a range of intellectual skills <p>Homework can assist in the development of generic skills by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing opportunities for individualised work • fostering initiative and independence • developing skills in using libraries and other learning resources • training pupils in planning and organising time • developing good habits and self-discipline • encouraging ownership and responsibility for learning <p>Homework can be beneficial to schools through</p>	<p>Homework can act to the disadvantage of schools when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it increases negative attitudes • it reduces the opportunities for pupils to develop academic skills from involvement in everyday life • parents pressure children too much • parents create confusion in explaining material • parents have different approaches to teaching from those adopted by the school • parents do homework for their children or contribute excessively • pupils cheat or copy • the differences between high and low achievers are increased <p>Homework can have a negative impact on the family when it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disrupts family life • causes friction within the family

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easing time constraints on the curriculum and allowing examination demands to be met • allowing assessment of pupils' progress and mastery of work • exploiting resources not available in school • fulfilling the expectations of parents, pupils, politicians and the public • enabling accountability to external inspection agencies <p>Homework can promote home-school liaison by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging the involvement of parents • developing links and opportunities for dialogue between parents and the school <p>Promoting family communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages parents and children to work together 	<p>Homework can be detrimental to the individual when it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • causes anxiety • reduces motivation to learn • creates boredom, fatigue and emotional exhaustion • reduces time for leisure activities <p>Homework can have a negative impact on society when it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduces time for involvement in community activities • polarises the opportunities for children from different economic circumstances because some have better facilities • and resources than others
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Derived from Cowan and Hallam (1999) cited in Hallam (2006)

Appendix 12: Pilot Study - The School

The location

The school is located in the largest town in a county in the East of England. In the early 1960s the town was designated as a Middlesex or London overspill town. This was part of the government policy of re-housing residents of Greater London and although this started in the 1930s it continued after the Second World War following a housing shortage until the 1970s. The town was identified as one to expand and was discussed in Parliament on 12 December 1961. Joyce Butler the MP for Wood Green asked the question of Charles Hill, Minister of Housing and Local Government and Minister for Welsh Affairs, what arrangements were being made for the housing overspill from Middlesex to which he replied, giving the district council of this town as an example, of the scheme already in place. The school's catchment area includes the London overspill housing estates in one of the older parts of the town. Today the town is a prosperous commercial centre with a range of technology based and light industries. The market town has a population of around 40,000 residents, which is expected to increase to over 60,000 in the next twenty years. It has a thriving local economy and excellent transport links with the centre of London reached in less than one hour by rail and road.

The school

The school opened in September 1971 on a temporary site before moving to its current site in 1972. The school is a co-educational comprehensive school, educating students from the age of eleven to nineteen with c850 students on roll in 2011. It is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form. In early 2000s the school was designated a Specialist College becoming the first of this specialism in the county. Later in 2000s it was awarded Artsmark, Sportsmark and Investors in People. It later gained foundation status and a federation between this school and the other secondary school in the town was formed. These two secondary schools,

along with the majority of secondary schools in the county, converted to Academy status. The school has strong links with a local special school whose pupils attend the secondary school for some post sixteen lessons.

Ofsted reports

In late 2000s the school was placed in special measures by Ofsted but moved to satisfactory with outstanding features two years later. The school was a smaller than the average secondary school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals was in line with the national average, students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language was below the national average. The Ofsted inspection report stated that the percentage of students attending the school with special educational needs was above the national average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs was nearly twice the national average. There were very few looked after children. The main findings of the report stated that since the setting up of the federation, expectations, attainment, progress, teaching, behaviour and attendance had all improved. The quality of teaching had improved and was rated as good with lessons well planned to meet the learners' needs and there would continue to be planned improvements to the curriculum. The report also stated that "The dialogue created around the students' response to homework was a powerful feature". There was still work to do and the report stated that in order to improve further the school would need to raise standards and pupil progress through the pace of learning, to engage the learners through an efficient and effective curriculum and targeted professional development. The aspirations of the students needed to be raised and to offer parents and carers the opportunity to support their child's learning.

The school under the new name and academy status was again inspected by Ofsted two years later and was graded as inadequate. The inspection still

reported that the proportion of disabled pupils, and those with a statement of special educational needs was above average. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds were still below average as was the number of pupils who had English as an additional language. However the inspection stated that those pupils who were eligible for support through pupil premium, free school meals and pupils from service families was average. This was a change from the previous report, when it was stated to have been below the national average. The inspection explained how a small number of pupils attended alternation provision at key stage four in areas of farming and engineering. As part of the local academy partnership the school supports an alternative provision nearby that supports pupils deemed to be at risk of exclusion or have poor attendance due to medical or behavioural issues. The school also had an onsite nursery. The Ofsted inspection report highlighted a number of areas where the school had serious weaknesses and these included below average GCSE results especially in English and Mathematics, teaching did not take into account the pupils abilities, marking did not have an impact on achievement, lessons were ineffective, the school improvement plan did not show how improvement in teaching and achievement would take place, leadership and governors were not effective. As an inadequate graded school by Ofsted it was visited regularly by inspectors, the first visit just four months after the Ofsted inspection saw some improvement in training of teaching staff, detailed improvement plans were written and there were changes to the leadership team and chair of governors. Four months later there was still more improvement, however some areas were still seen as needing improvement and these included marking, expectations and monitoring. This was still the case to some extent in the final visit. The school had another full inspection a year later when it was graded as requires improvement and therefore had moved out of the inadequate category.

The Homework Policy

The school had a policy in place based on the Local Authority recommended homework policy and this is reviewed on an annual basis by the Curriculum Committee of the Governors. The policy in place at the time of the study had been reviewed by the Curriculum Committee in the Autumn term of 2008 and was due to be reviewed during the same term in 2010. The Homework Policy is linked to other school policies including Inclusion, Curriculum, Learning and Teaching and Marking policies. It is also explained at the start of the policy that "homework is any work or activity which students are asked to do outside lesson time whether on their own or with parents or carers" It also explained that homework should not prevent students in participating in school extracurricular activities. The school had a homework club for those students who wanted to complete their homework in school or did not have support or resources at home.

The school homework policy stated that homework was set to reinforce learning and prepare for future work skills:

"The purpose of homework

- To encourage students to develop the confidence and self-discipline to work on their own.
- To consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding.
- To extend learning, for example through additional reading.
- To enable students to devote time to particular demands such as GCSE coursework or project work.
- To develop both subject specific and transferrable skills, which are essential skills for adult life.
- To support the home/school relationship.

(Appendix 17)

The amount of homework

The guidelines set down by the government in 1998 by the Education Secretary, David Blunkett, during the New Labour government of Tony Blair, are still used by schools today. The amount suggested for homework at the school was in line with the government guidelines. Students in years seven and eight should receive between forty five and ninety minutes each day, year nine students should receive between one and two hours each day and students in year ten and eleven should receive between one and a half and two and a half hours each day. According to the government guidelines students in year twelve and thirteen would receive homework in line with school policies for their programmes. For this school it is recommended that students in years twelve and thirteen receive up to five hours per week per subject. The homework policy stated that teachers should not normally set homework to be completed for the next day but to give students at least two days to complete their homework and that the time given to homework should increase through the age groups. Students in years ten and eleven would be given sixty minutes to ninety minutes per subject each week.

The type of homework

The types of homework suggested that staff should set included:

- Writing assignments.
- Learning assignments.
- Preparing an oral presentation.
- Practising skills learnt in lessons.
- Reading in preparation for a lesson.
- Finding out information/researching a project.
- Consolidating the lesson.
- Cross-curricular or themed project work.

The policy went on to explain to staff, students and families that homework tasks should be linked to study programmes and was a planned progression from the lesson. Homework should also be differentiated just as lessons should be. Feedback should be given as soon as possible and in an appropriate manner.

Responsibilities

The school saw their responsibility in different areas. The subject teacher should be setting appropriate homework and assessing and monitoring it. They should check that homework is recorded in the student planner, and they should respond to homework and give prompt feedback. Heads of Department should ensure that the staff in their department were setting appropriate homework, and assessing it by monitoring it every half term through the quality assurance process. Governors should ensure that leadership and management of the school enforced the policy and that during their visit to the department they should see evidence that this is happening. There was a homework club at the school three times each week.

The policy stated that parents and carers also had a responsibility in that they should ensure that students take responsibility for their work and that they completed the work set. As the student became a more independent learner the families should take less active approach to supporting them and allow them to work more freely on their own. They needed to provide an area for students to complete homework or encourage them to use the school facilities. Parents and carers must make sure that the student meets any deadlines set and check and sign the planner to record this. Parents and carers should encourage the student with their homework and use praise to support this. They should contact the school if they had concerns.

The policy also stated that students had responsibilities. They should always have their planners with them and record homework in it even if they have written the homework in their exercise book. This is to show that there is record of it in their planner. Students are expected to complete homework to the best of their ability, to take pride in their work and understand that deadlines must be met. If the student is absent from school they must catch up with any homework missed. If they have any problems it is their responsibility to speak to a member of staff.

Sanctions

There were sanctions in place for non-completion of homework. If homework was not completed, families would be notified via the planner and an extension may be given. A letter would be sent to parents of students who regularly did not complete their homework detailing the importance of completing homework and requesting the support of parents. Students were also directed to the homework club and if course work was not completed a detention would be given.

Feedback to Students

If homework was to be beneficial, students must be given prompt verbal or written feedback. The school asked the teachers to assess the work as quickly as possible and in an appropriate manner, although a time limit or method of feedback was stated. Again students were encouraged to attend a daily homework club and the pastoral team would monitor attendance.

Setting and Monitoring Homework

Homework was monitored by the subject leader and by line managers and took place every half term through scrutiny of the work. Homework should be set at the start of the lesson and written so that the students have a chance to

write it in their planner. The recording of homework was monitored by personal tutors and pastoral leaders.

Appropriate Homework

The policy stated that homework tasks should be linked to the work in class and should be part of the planning of the unit of work. If the homework was a continuation of classwork then there should be a clear indication of this in the planned work. As well as classwork, homework should be differentiated to take into account the needs of the students. The students should be capable of completing the work and that it is appropriate for their ability and if necessary extension work should be set. Students should be able to work independently.

The Student Planner

Each student was given a planner at the start of the academic year. Key information was in the planner including their details, code of behaviour, dates and times of the school day, punctuality and attendance also information about undertaking homework. The planner stated that homework would support the student in developing skills including independent learning. It also stated that homework may vary from subject to subject. Homework must be recorded in the planner and guidance was given about the amount of time to be spent on homework based on the government's recommendation. The Student Planner would be where homework would be written and could be monitored by parents and signed by them. The form teacher would also sign this, so they could monitor the homework set for their form group.

Home-School Agreement

Alongside the School Homework Policy there was also a Home-School Agreement in the student planner. The agreement stated that the school would provide a homework timetable and study planner and that the school

would set and mark appropriate work for homework or personal study. The student would write homework in their planner and complete homework on time and parents would provide an appropriate environment for work at home and should take an interest in their child's learning.

All documents included guidelines for the amount of homework, the type of homework and what support is in place for completing the homework so pupils, teacher and parents were aware of what was required of each stakeholder.

Appendix 13: Pilot Study Students Questionnaire

Student Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire. All questionnaires are anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. In this case any data that has been collected in relation to you will be destroyed. All data collected for this project will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after a period of 12 months. Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions.

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* Required

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have had my questions answered satisfactorily *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have read and understood the information above *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to completing the questionnaire. *

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you male or female? *

☐ Male ☐ Female

What is your ethnic origin? *

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> White British | <input type="radio"/> White Irish |
| <input type="radio"/> Other White Background | <input type="radio"/> Black or Black British Caribbean |
| <input type="radio"/> Black or Black British African | <input type="radio"/> Other Black Background |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Indian | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Pakistani |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black Caribbean |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black African | <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Asian |
| <input type="radio"/> Chinese | <input type="radio"/> Other Asian Background |
| <input type="radio"/> Other Mixed Background | <input type="radio"/> Other Ethnic Background |
| <input type="radio"/> Information refused | |

Are you on the Gifted and Talented Register? *

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

What year group are you in? *

☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13

Which set are you in for English? *

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Not in a set ☐ Other

Do you get additional support in English? *

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Are you set homework in the following subjects? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Languages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Drama | <input type="checkbox"/> Business studies | <input type="checkbox"/> ICT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociology | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure Travel and Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Social Care | | |

How much homework are you set? List the subjects and how much is set each week

How much homework do you get in English?

- ☐ Too much ☐ About right ☐ Not enough ☐ None

What sort of homework is set? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- ☐ Finishing off class work ☐ Coursework ☐ Revision
☐ Preparation for classwork ☐ Other - please state:

Where do you complete your homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- ☐ Home ☐ Library ☐ In class
☐ At friends ☐ Homework Club ☐ Other - please state:

Do you get help with homework from your parents/carers?

- ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

What happens if you don't complete the homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detention | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in your own time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state: | |

Why do you think you are given homework?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Reinforces what you have done in class | <input type="radio"/> Helps you learn more |
| <input type="radio"/> To finish class work | <input type="radio"/> Helps you to work independently |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson | <input type="radio"/> Punishment |
| <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: | |

How much time are you given to complete homework?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 day | <input type="radio"/> 2 days | <input type="radio"/> 3 days | <input type="radio"/> 4 days |
| <input type="radio"/> Up to a week | <input type="radio"/> A week | <input type="radio"/> Longer than a week | |

How soon after you have handed homework in do you get feedback?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Within 24 hours | <input type="radio"/> Less than a week | <input type="radio"/> More than a week |
| <input type="radio"/> Never | | |

Does completing homework help you to improve your grades?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|

Appendix 14: Pilot Study Families Questionnaire

Parents Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire. All questionnaires are anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. In this case any data that has been collected in relation to you will be destroyed. All data collected for this project will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after a period of 12 months. Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions.

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* Required

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have had my questions answered satisfactorily *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have read and understood the information above *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to completing the questionnaire. *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you male or female? *

☐ Male

☐ Female

What is your ethnic origin? *

☐

White British

☐

Other White Background

☐

Black or Black British African

☐

Asian or Asian British Indian

☐

Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi

☐

Mixed - White and Black African

☐

Chinese

☐

Other Mixed Background

☐

Information refused

☐

White Irish

☐

Black or Black British Caribbean

☐

Other Black Background

☐

Asian or Asian British Pakistani

☐

Mixed - White and Black Caribbean

☐

Mixed - White and Asian

☐

Other Asian Background

☐

Other Ethnic Background

Is your child on the Gifted and Talented Register? *

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

What year group is your child in? *

☐

7

☐

8

☐

9

☐

10

☐

11

☐

12

☐

13

Which set is your child in for English? *

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

Not in a set

☐

Don't know

☐

Other

Does your child get additional support in English? *

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

Is homework set in the following subjects? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Languages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Business studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Drama | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> ICT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociology | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure Travel and Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Social Care | | |

How much homework does your child get in English?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much | <input type="checkbox"/> About right | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|

What sort of homework is set? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work | <input type="radio"/> Coursework | <input type="radio"/> Revision |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork | <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: | |

Where does your child complete their homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Home | <input type="radio"/> Library | <input type="radio"/> In class |
| <input type="radio"/> At friends | <input type="radio"/> Homework Club | <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: |

Do you help with homework?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Always | <input type="radio"/> Sometimes | <input type="radio"/> Never |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|

What happens if your child does not complete their homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detention | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in their own time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state: | |

Why do you think your child is given homework?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class | <input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more |
| <input type="radio"/> To finish class work | <input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson | <input type="radio"/> Punishment |
| <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: | |

Do you think completing homework helps your child to improve their grades?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|

Appendix 15: Pilot Study Teachers Questionnaire

Teachers Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire. All questionnaires are anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. In this case any data that has been collected in relation to you will be destroyed. All data collected for this project will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after a period of 12 months. Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

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* Required

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have had my questions answered satisfactorily *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have read and understood the information above *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to completing the questionnaire. *

☐ Yes ☐ No

What year group do you teach? Tick as many boxes applicable

☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13

What subject do you teach?

☐ English ☐ Mathematics ☐ Science ☐ Languages
☐ Humanities ☐ Technology ☐ Physical Education ☐ Business studies
☐ Media ☐ Drama ☐ Music ☐ ICT
☐ Art ☐ Psychology ☐ Sociology
☐ Leisure Travel and Tourism ☐ Health and Social Care

What sort of homework is set? Tick as many boxes as applicable

☐ Finishing off class work ☐ Coursework ☐ Revision
☐ Preparation for classwork ☐ Other - please state:

How long should the homework you set take to complete?

☐ Up to 30 minutes ☐ Up to 60 minutes ☐ Up to 90 minutes ☐ Over 90 minutes

Do your students complete their homework?

☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Are there any sanctions in place if your students do not complete homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable

☐ Given another chance ☐ Completed in school
☐ Detention ☐ Completed in their own time
☐ Parents informed ☐ Reported to another teacher
☐ Nothing happens ☐ No sanctions
☐ Other - please state:

Why is homework set?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class | <input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more |
| <input type="radio"/> To finish class work | <input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson | <input type="radio"/> Punishment |
| <input type="radio"/> School policy | <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: |

How is homework useful?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class | <input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more |
| <input type="radio"/> To finish class work | <input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson | <input type="radio"/> Punishment |
| <input type="radio"/> School policy | <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: |

How much time do you give to complete homework?

- ☐ 1 day ☐ 2 days ☐ 3 days ☐ 4 days ☐ Up to a week ☐ A week
☐ Longer than a week

How soon after homework is completed do you give feedback?

- ☐ Within 24 hours ☐ Less than a week ☐ More than a week

What type of homework is most effective in improving academic performance? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- ☐ Finishing off class work ☐ Coursework ☐ Revision
☐ Preparation for classwork ☐ Other - please state:

Appendix 16: Pilot Study Governors Questionnaire

Governor Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire. All questionnaires are anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. In this case any data that has been collected in relation to you will be destroyed. All data collected for this project will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after a period of 12 months. Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions.

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* Required

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have had my questions answered satisfactorily *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have read and understood the information above *

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to completing the questionnaire. *

☐ Yes ☐ No

What category of governor are you?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Co-opted | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate | <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Is there a homework policy?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you on the committee that reviews the homework policy?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why is homework set?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class | <input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more |
| <input type="radio"/> To finish class work | <input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson | <input type="radio"/> Punishment |
| <input type="radio"/> School policy | |

What type of homework do you think works best?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class | <input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more |
| <input type="radio"/> To finish class work | <input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently |
| <input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson | <input type="radio"/> Punishment |
| <input type="radio"/> School policy | |

Do you think homework improve grades?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are there any sanctions in place if the students do not complete homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detention | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in their own time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No sanctions: | |

Appendix 17: Pilot Study School Homework Policy

School Homework Policy

To maintain improvements in standards through strategic planning, consistency and high quality teaching, learning and assessment and guidance

Policy approved by Curriculum Committee	Summer 2005
Review by Curriculum Committee	Summer 2006
Full review by Curriculum Committee	Spring 2008
Review by Curriculum Committee	Autumn 2009
Review due by Curriculum Committee	Autumn 2010

This Policy links closely with a number of other College Policies, in particular:

- Disability Equality Scheme
- Inclusion Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Marking Policy

Homework is any work or activity which students are asked to do outside lesson time either on their own or with parents or carers.

Homework should not prevent students from participating in activities after College such as sport, music or clubs of any kind.

The purpose of homework

- To encourage students to develop the confidence and self-discipline to work on their own.
- To consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding.
- To extend learning, for example through additional reading.
- To enable students to devote time to particular demands such as GCSE coursework or project work.
- To develop both subject specific and transferrable skills, which are essential skills for adult life.
- To support the home/school relationship.

The amount of homework

Students will receive a guideline homework timetable to help them manage their time. Teachers will not normally set homework to be completed for the next day, but will give students at least two days to complete the homework. The time devoted to homework should increase as the student progresses through the college.

Students in Years 7-9 should expect one homework per week for English, Maths, Science, Citizenship and Modern Foreign Languages (French/German), which should take between 45 minutes and one hour. Subjects taught in rotation blocks will set homework at the appropriate time, this homework may take the form of a longer project due to the practical nature of these courses.

Students in Year 10-11 should expect between an hour and an hour and a half per subject, per week.

Students in Years 12 and 13 are expected to devote approximately five hours per week outside lessons to each subject. Students are encouraged in

addition, to read as widely as possible around their chosen subjects to broaden their knowledge.

Type of Homework

Homework might include such things as:

- Writing assignments.
- Learning assignments.
- Preparing an oral presentation.
- Practicing skills learnt in lessons
- Reading in preparation for a lesson.
- Finding out information/researching a project.
- Consolidating the lesson
- Cross-curricular or themed project work

It is important that students should have frequent and increasing opportunities to develop and consolidate their competencies as independent learners.

School's responsibilities

The subject teacher is responsible for setting appropriate homework and assessing it regularly and appropriately. ***S/he should check that students are recording details of homework set in their planners with the aid of a TA if necessary*** . Homework should be set to ensure that there is more than one night in which to do it. This allows students to plan their time, participate in out of college activities if they wish, and still be able to do their homework.

Heads of subject are responsible for ensuring that all teachers in their department are setting appropriate homework regularly and assessing it appropriately. ***This should be checked half-termly as part of the faculty CQA process***

Governors are responsible for ensuring that the leadership and management of the college are consistently enforcing this policy. As part of their governor monitoring visit a governor should expect to see evidence that homework is being set and assessed properly.

Parents'/Carers' role in homework

- Parents/carers should support students with their homework but accept that their role should become less and less “hands on” as students take greater responsibility and become more independent learners.
- Parents/carers should try and provide a reasonable place where students can work or encourage them to make use of the college's facilities.
- Parents/carers should ensure students meet homework deadlines and should regularly check and sign planners to show this has happened.
- If parents/carers feel that insufficient or too much homework is being set, they should contact the tutor who will investigate the situation.
- Parents/carers should make it clear to students that they value homework and support the college in explaining how it can help them to progress.
- Parents/carers should encourage students and praise them when homework is completed and submitted on time.

Students' responsibilities

- Students should always carry their planners with them.
- Students should record the homework set even if they have written it in detail in their exercise book.
- Students need to accept that deadlines must be met.

- If students are absent, they need to find out what work has been missed and catch up on it. **Being away on the day that homework is set is not an excuse for not doing it.**
- Problems with homework should be resolved before the deadline. If necessary students should see the member of staff concerned for help.
- Students should take a pride in doing their best.

Non-completion of Homework

Parents will be notified via the planner that homework has not been completed, an extension may be given (at the discretion of the teacher). Failure to complete homework will result in a score of zero being recorded. Tutors will monitor non-completion of homework using the planner and the parents of regular non-completers will be contacted using a standard letter. The letter will detail the importance of homework and will request parental support in developing good habits. Students who regularly do not complete homework will be directed to a homework club. Non-completion of coursework will normally result in a detention.

Feedback for Students

If homework is to be of the greatest benefit, students must be given prompt verbal or written feedback from teachers. Work should be assessed as swiftly as possible and in an appropriate manner. Students should be encouraged to attend Homework Club, which is on for an hour after College Monday to Thursday, and during lunchtime on Friday. Heads of House will monitor each half term and take appropriate action.

Setting and Monitoring Homework

Setting of homework will be monitored by the Subject Leader and appropriate Line Managers. Monitoring will happen at half-termly intervals, and will be evidenced by work-scrutiny. Homework should be set in the first 15-20 mins

of a lesson and should be displayed so that students have the opportunity to write it down (aided by TA's where necessary). The recording of homework will be monitored by Personal Tutors and House Leaders. Appropriate follow-up inspection will be initiated by the House Leaders.

Appropriate Homework

Homework tasks should have a clear objective, linked to study programmes. They should be planned as carefully as any other part of the programme. Where homework is a planned progression from the lesson, it is good practice to note the time and date in the margin at the end of classwork, so that the homework carried out can be clearly identified.

It is vital that homework tasks are differentiated appropriately taking account of the wide range of abilities and the individual learning needs of the students. It is necessary to ensure that all students understand what they have to do so they are able to work independently, and that the instruction noted will allow parents to provide support. Where appropriate, extension tasks or more achievable tasks should be provided.

Government's recommended allocations:

Years 7 and 8	45 - 90 minutes per day
Year 9	1 - 2 hours per day
Years 10 and 11	1½ - 2½ hours per day
Years 12 and 13	Up to 5 hours per week per subject

The time allocations are a guideline only and will vary. Some projects may take a number of weeks to complete.

Autumn 2009

Appendix 18: Pilot Study Students Questionnaire Results

Results Homework – Students

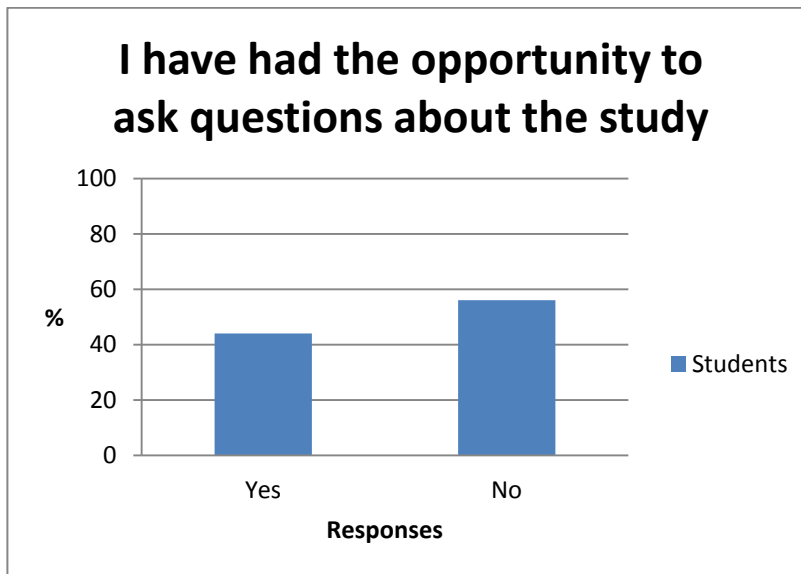


Figure 3.1 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

Table 3.1 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

	Students
Yes	44
No	56

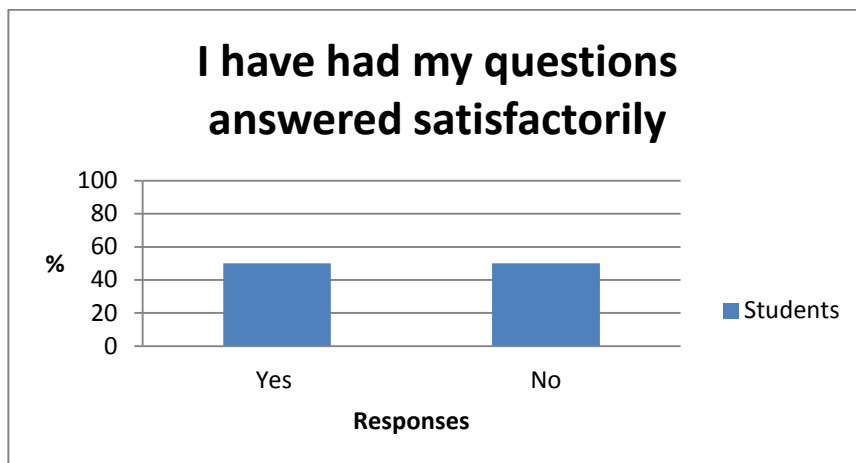


Figure 3.2 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

Table 3.2 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

	Students
Yes	50
No	50

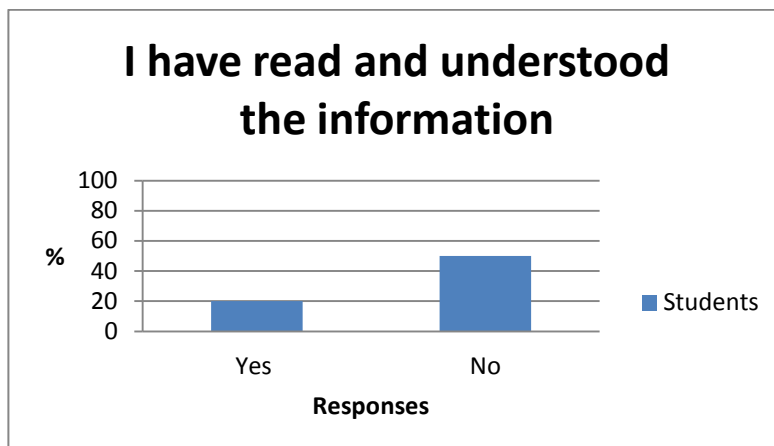


Figure 3.3 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

Table 3.3 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

	Students
Yes	20
No	50

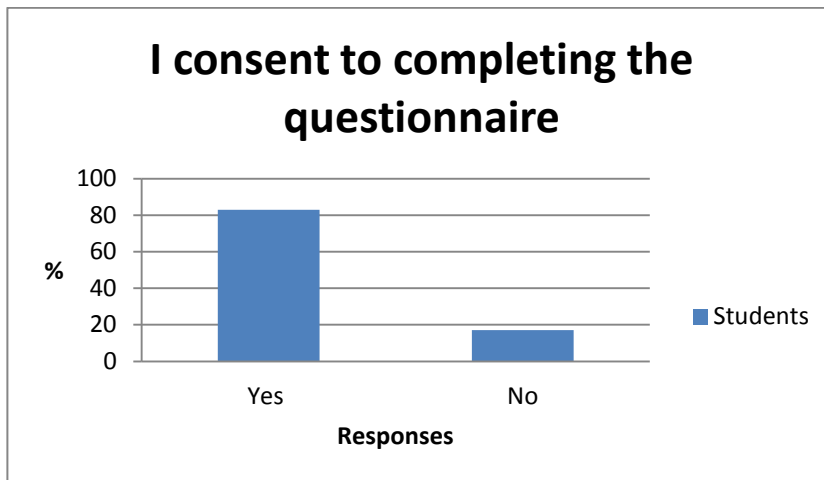


Figure 3.4 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

Table 3.4 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

	Students
Yes	83
No	17

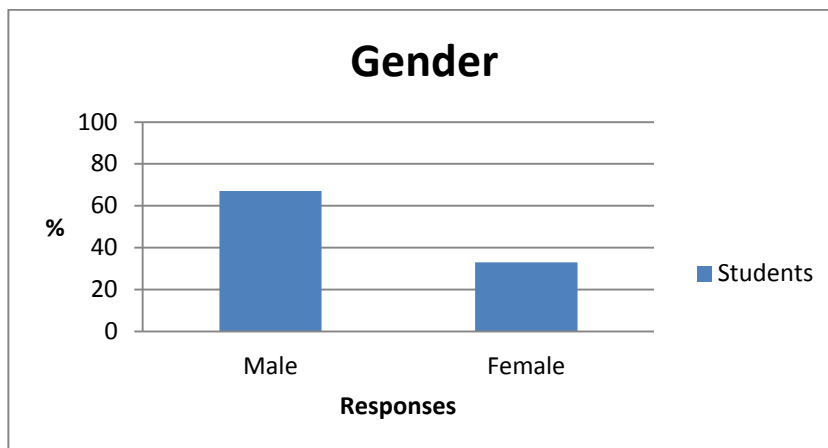


Figure 3.5 Frequency chart – Gender

Table 3.5 Frequency chart – Gender

	Students
Male	67
Female	33

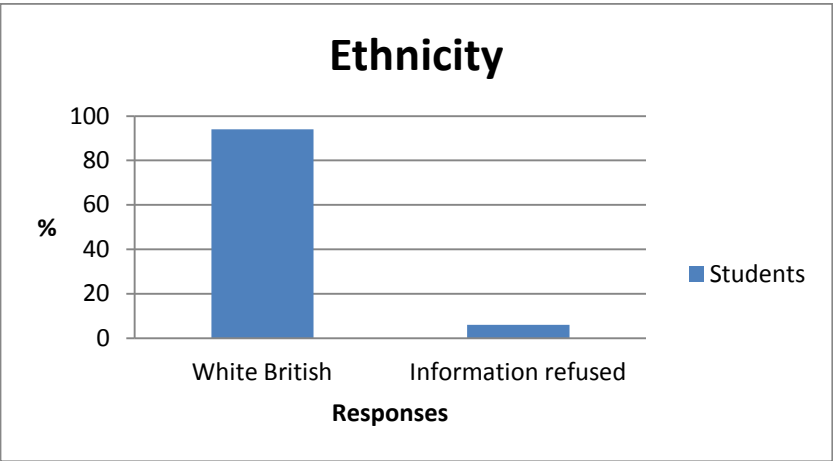


Figure 3.6 Frequency chart – Ethnicity

Table 3.6 Frequency chart – Ethnicity

	Students
White British	94
Information refused	6

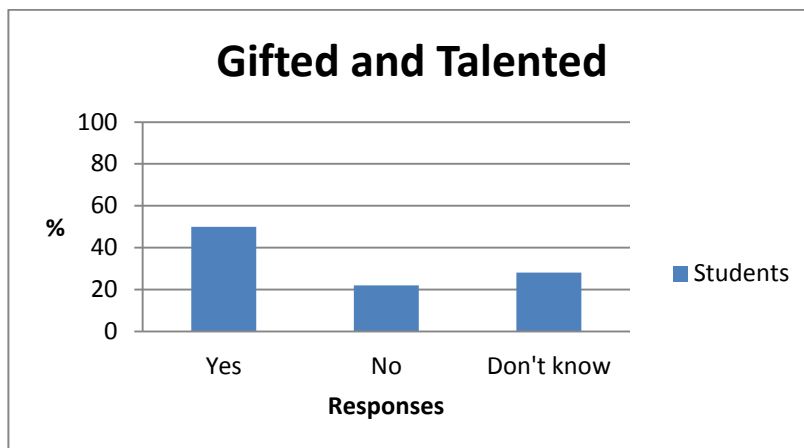


Figure 3.7 Frequency chart – Gifted and talented

Table 3.7 Frequency chart – Gifted and talented

	Students
Yes	50
No	22
Don't know	28

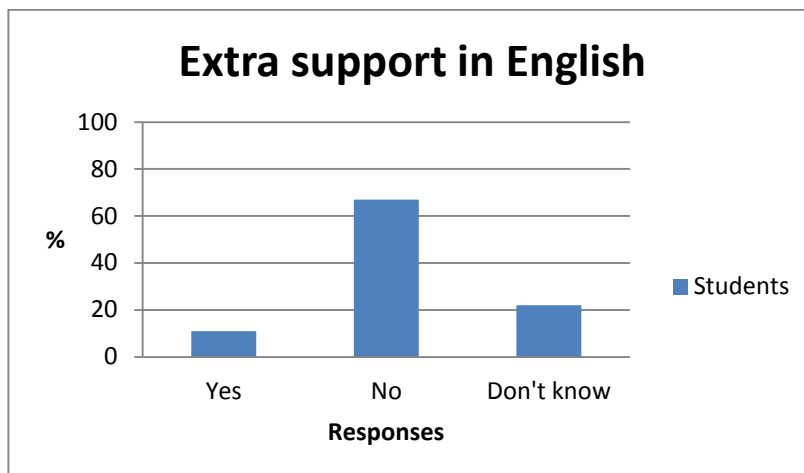


Figure 3.8 Frequency chart – Extra support in English

Table 3.8 Frequency chart – Extra support in English

	Students
Yes	11
No	67
Don't know	22

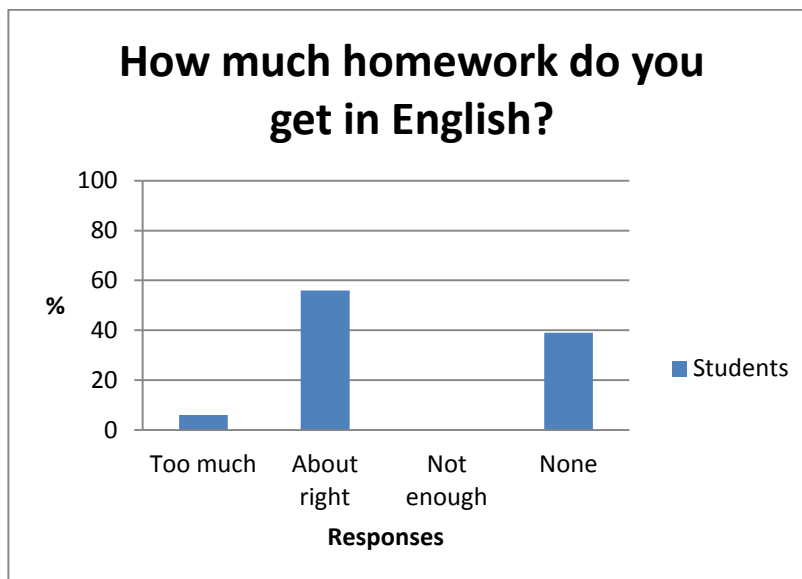


Figure 3.9 Frequency chart – How much homework do you get in English?

Table 3.9 Frequency chart – How much homework do you get in English?

	Students
Too much	6
About right	56
Not enough	0
None	39

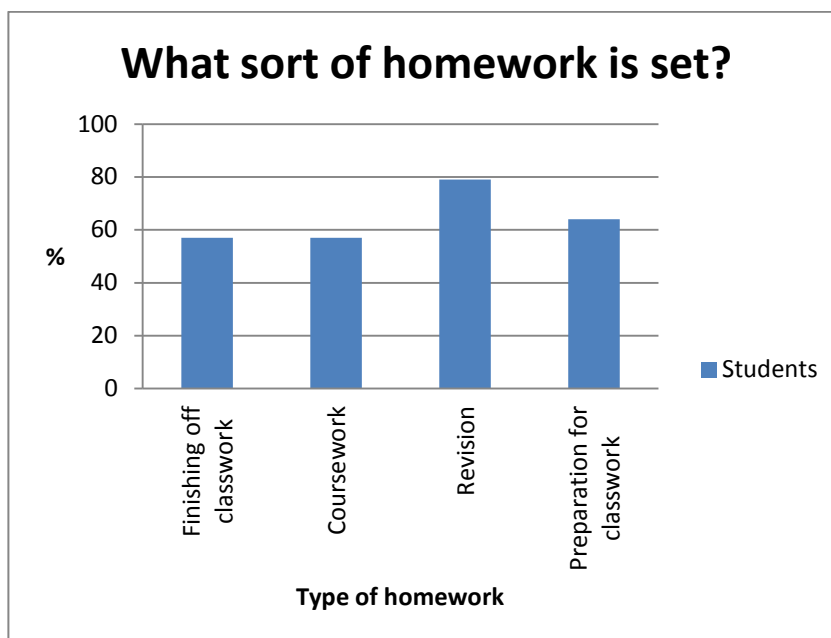


Figure 3.10 Frequency chart – What sort of homework is set?

Table 3.10 Frequency chart – What sort of homework is set?

	Students
Finishing off classwork	57
Coursework	57
Revision	79
Preparation for classwork	64

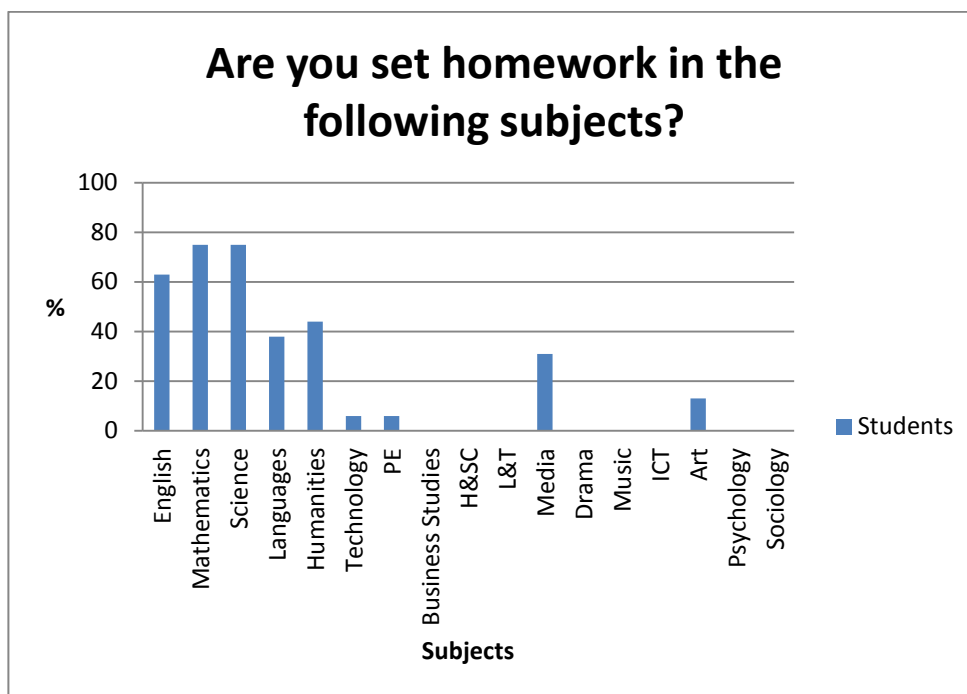


Figure 3.11 Frequency chart – Are you set homework in the following subjects?

Table 3.11 Frequency chart – Are you set homework in the following subjects?

	Students
English	63
Mathematics	75
Science	75
Languages	38
Humanities	44
Technology	6
PE	6
Business Studies	0
H&SC	0
L&T	0
Media	31
Drama	0
Music	0
ICT	0
Art	13
Psychology	0
Sociology	0

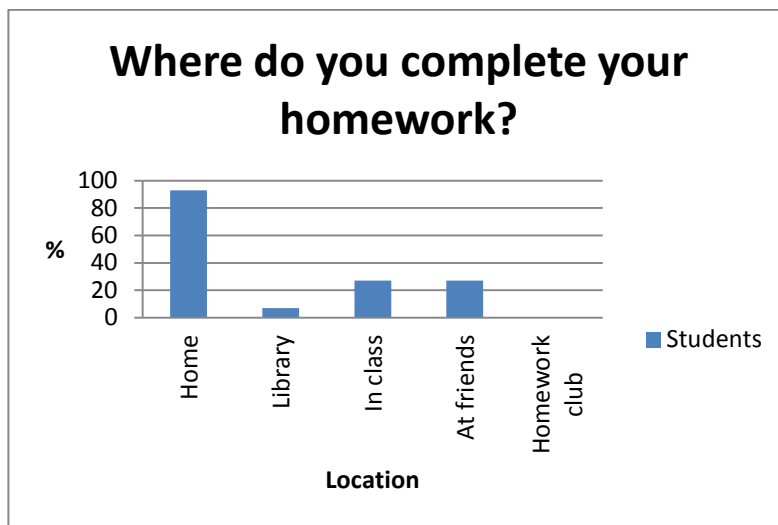


Figure 3.12 Frequency chart – Where do you complete your homework?

Table 3.12 Frequency chart – Where do you complete your homework?

	Students
Home	93
Library	7
In class	27
At friends	27
Homework club	0

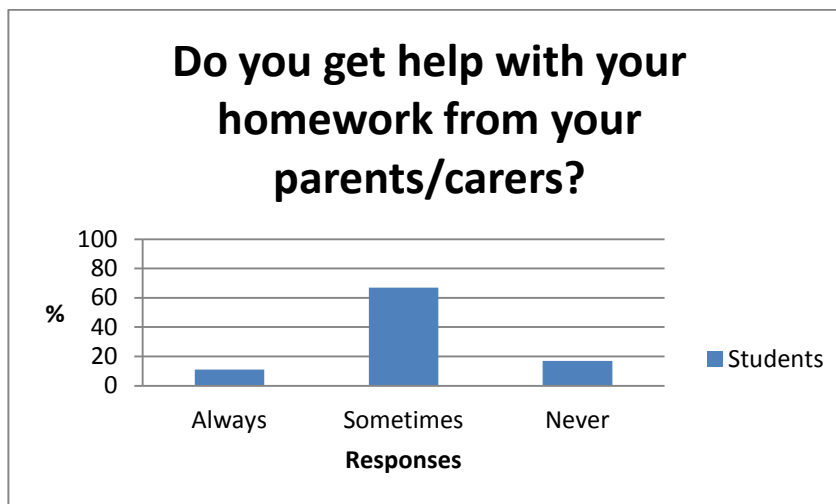


Figure 3.13 Frequency chart – Do you get help with your homework from your parents/carers?

Table 3.13 Frequency chart – Do you get help with your homework from your parents/carers?

	Students
Always	11
Sometimes	67
Never	17

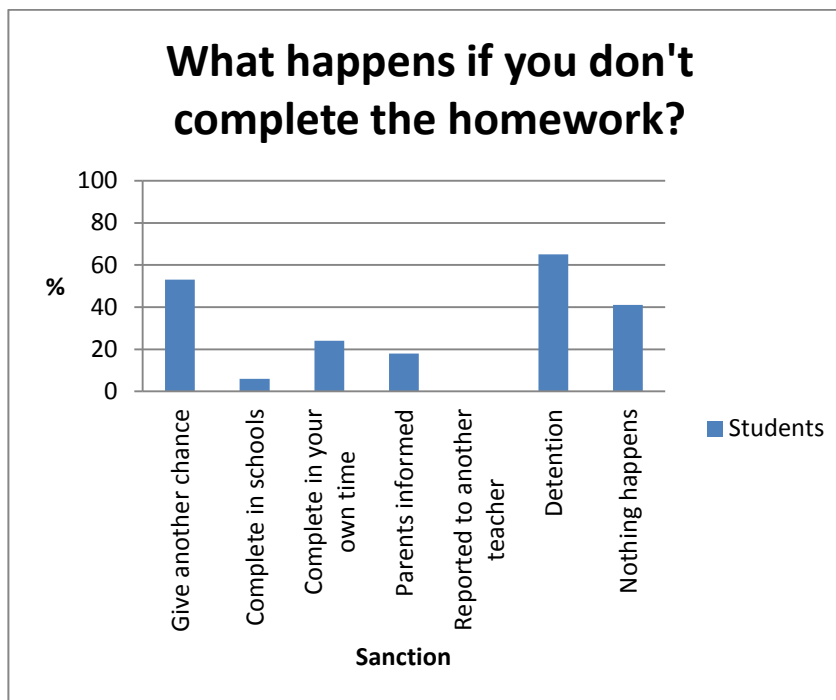


Figure 3.14 Frequency chart – What happens if you don't complete your homework?

Table 3.14 Frequency chart – What happens if you don't complete your homework?

	Students
Give another chance	53
Complete in schools	6
Complete in your own time	24
Parents informed	18
Reported to another teacher	0
Detention	65
Nothing happens	41

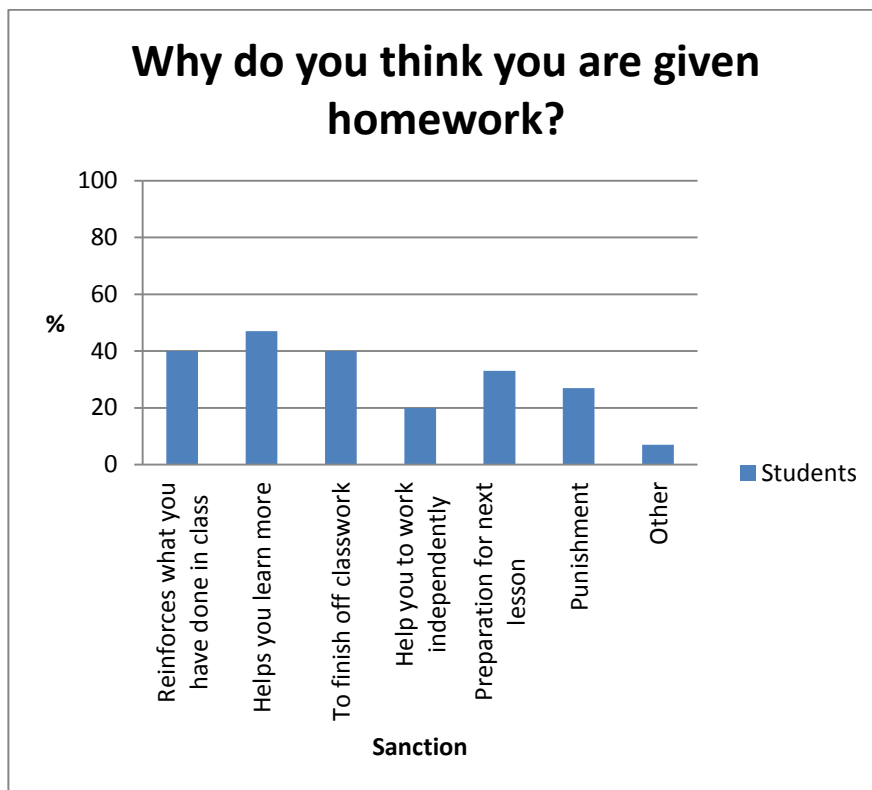


Figure 3.15 Frequency chart – Why do you think you are given homework?

Table 3.15 Frequency chart – Why do you think you are given homework?

	Students
Reinforces what you have done in class	40
Helps you learn more	47
To finish off classwork	40
Help you to work independently	20
Preparation for next lesson	33
Punishment	27
Other	7

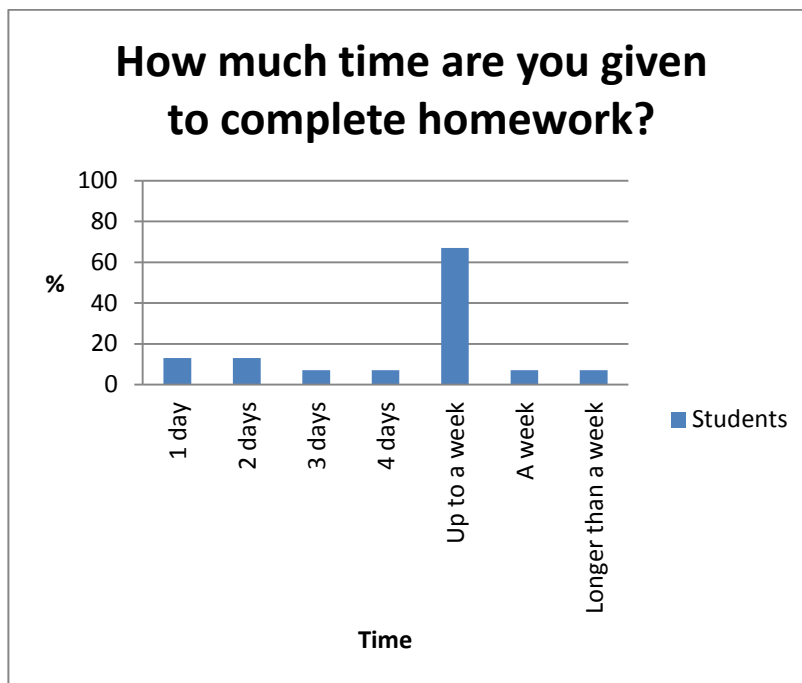


Figure 3.16 Frequency chart – How much time are you given to complete homework?

Table 3.16 Frequency chart – How much time are you given to complete homework?

	Students
1 day	13
2 days	13
3 days	7
4 days	7
Up to a week	67
A week	7
Longer than a week	7

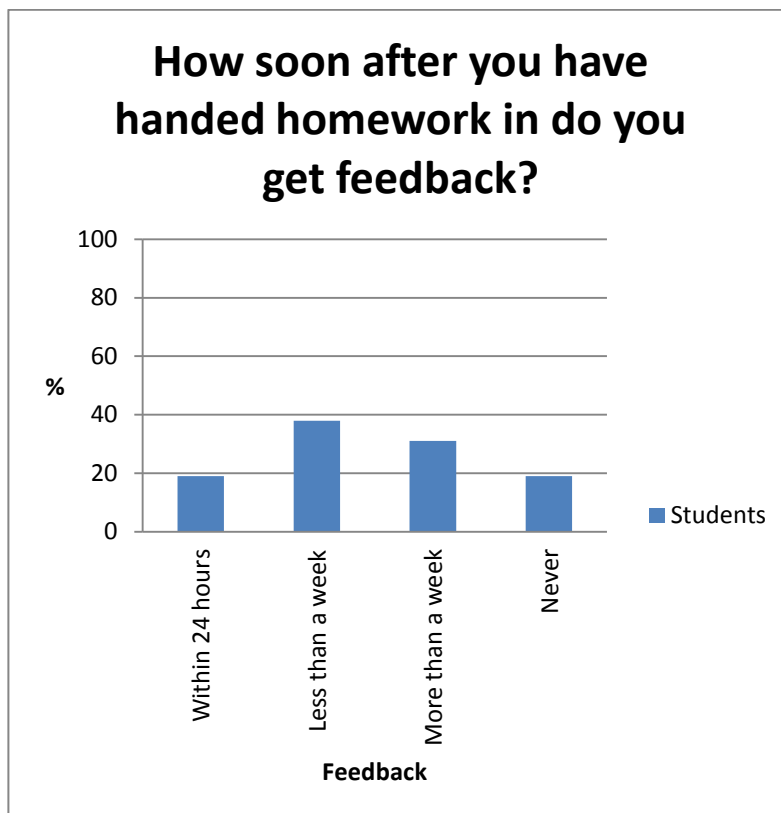


Figure 3.17 Frequency chart – How soon after you have handed homework in do you get feedback?

Table 3.17 Frequency chart – How soon after you have handed homework in do you get feedback?

	Students
Within 24 hours	19
Less than a week	38
More than a week	31
Never	19

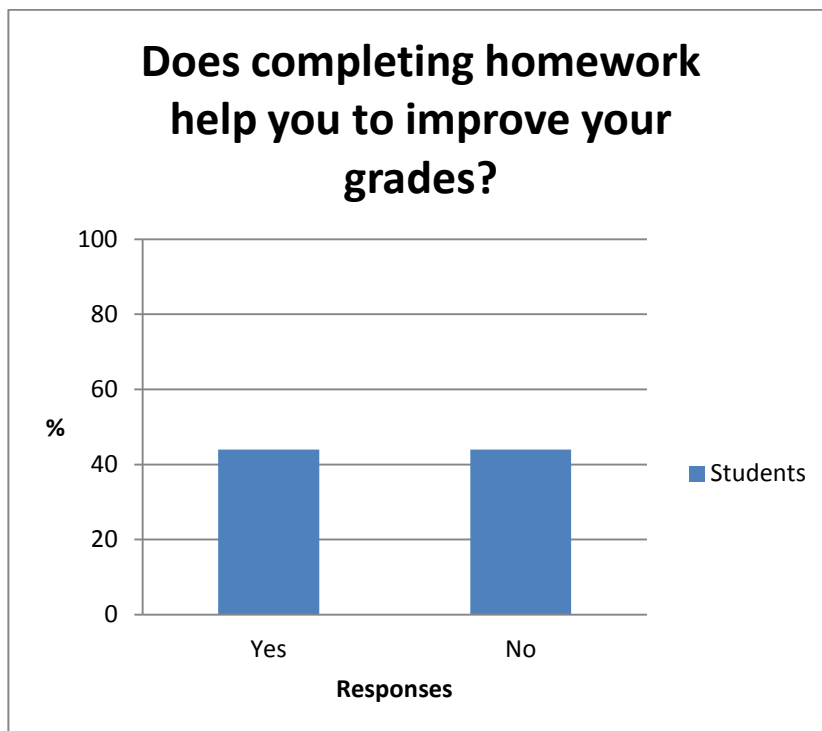


Figure 3.18 Frequency chart – Does completing homework help you to improve your grades?

Table 3.18 Frequency chart – Does completing homework help you to improve your grades?

	Students
Yes	44
No	44

Appendix 19: Pilot Study Families Questionnaire Results

Results Homework – Families

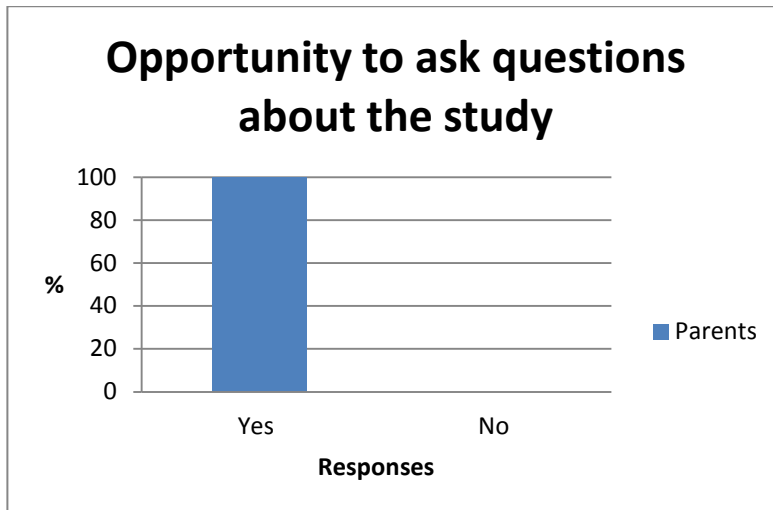


Figure 3.19 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

Table 3.19 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

	Parents
Yes	100
No	0

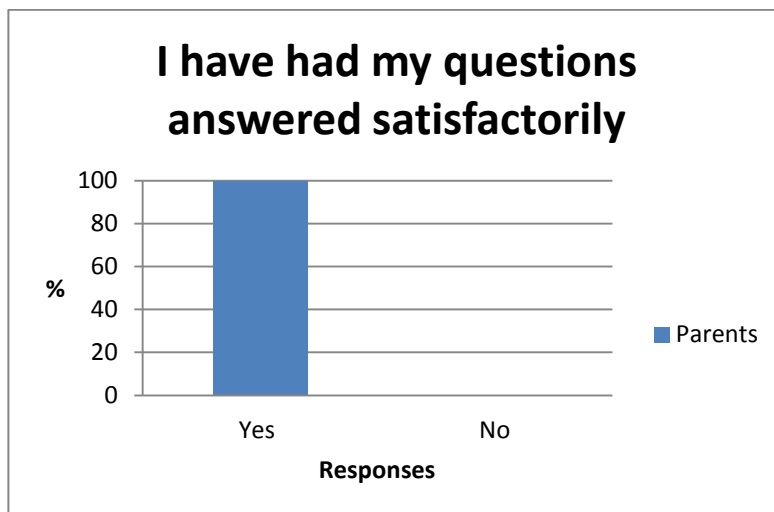


Figure 3.20 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

Table 3.20 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

	Parents
Yes	100
No	0

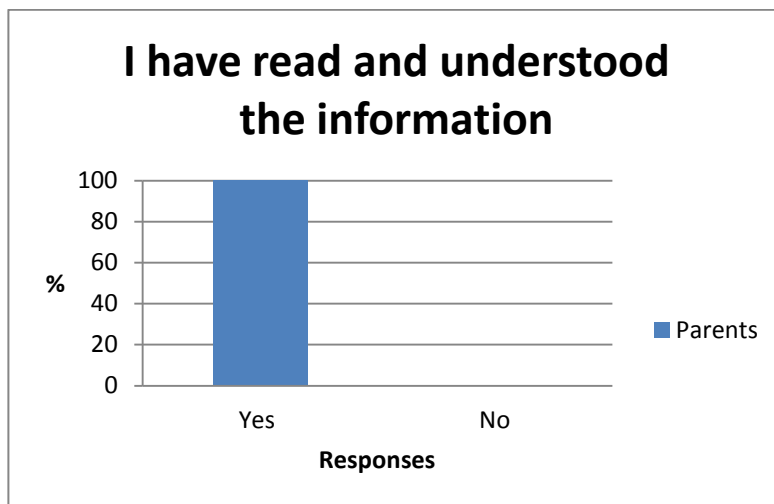


Figure 3.21 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

Table 3.21 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

	Parents
Yes	100
No	0

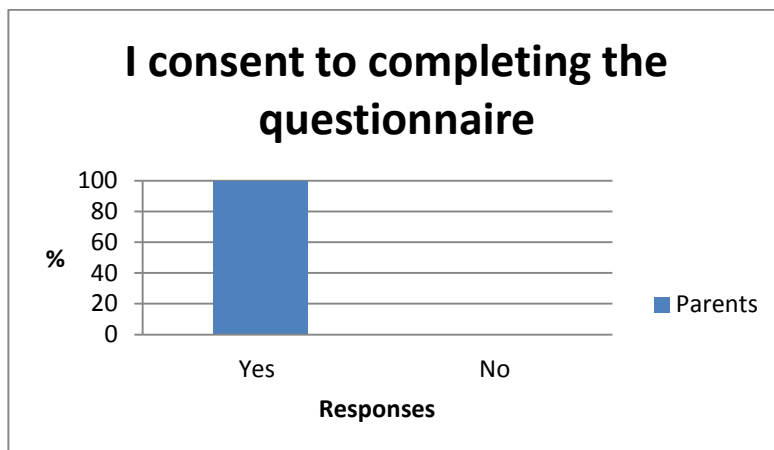


Figure 3.22 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

Table 3.22 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

	Parents
Yes	100
No	0

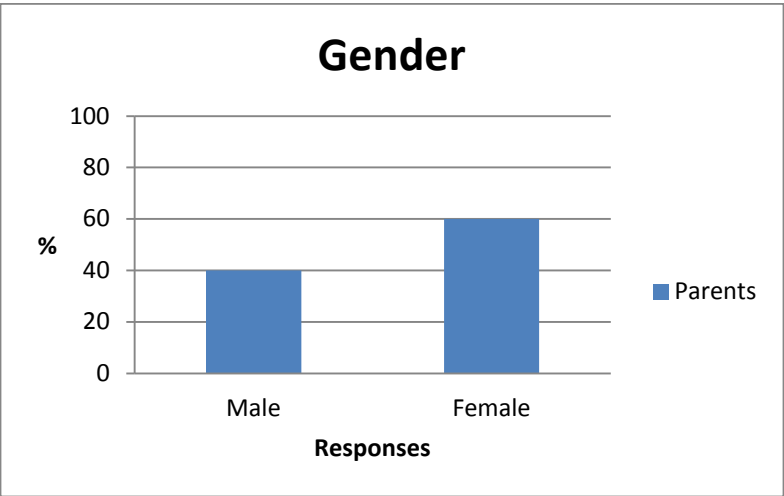


Figure 3.23 Frequency chart – Gender

Table 3.23 Frequency chart – Gender

	Parents
Male	40
Female	60

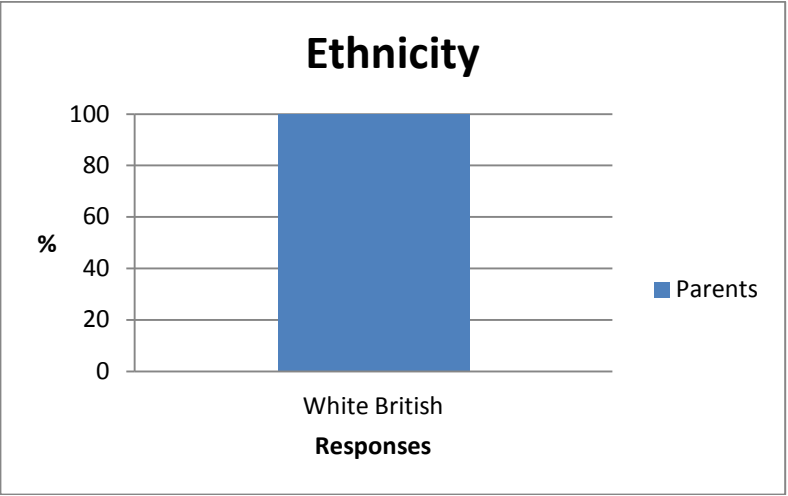


Figure 3.24 Frequency chart – Ethnicity

Table 3.24 Frequency chart – Ethnicity

	Parents
White British	100

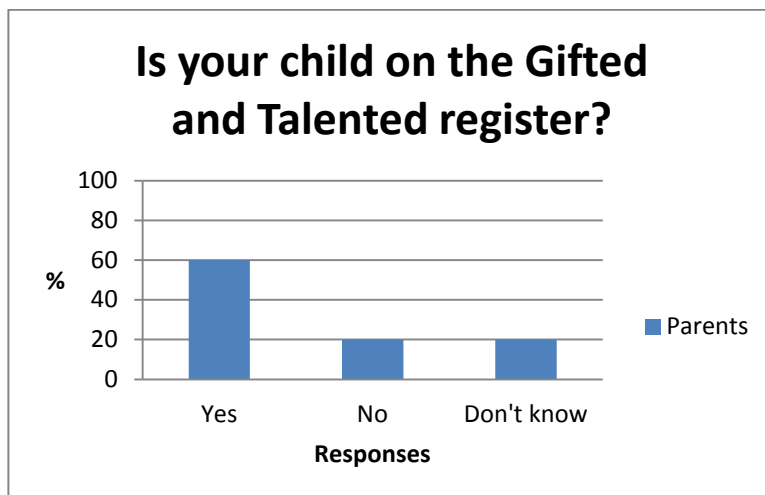


Figure 3.25 Frequency chart – Gifted and talented

Table 3.25 Frequency chart – Gifted and talented

	Parents
Yes	60
No	20
Don't know	20

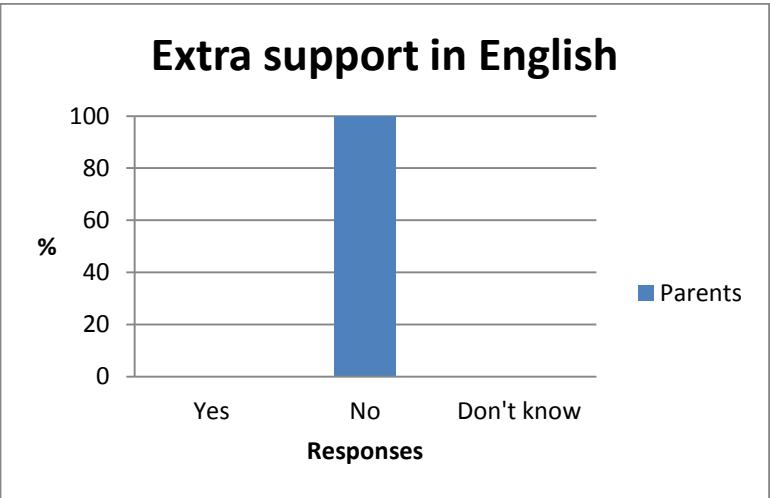


Figure 3.26 Frequency chart – Extra support in English

Table 3.26 Frequency chart – Extra support in English

	Parents
Yes	0
No	100
Don't know	0

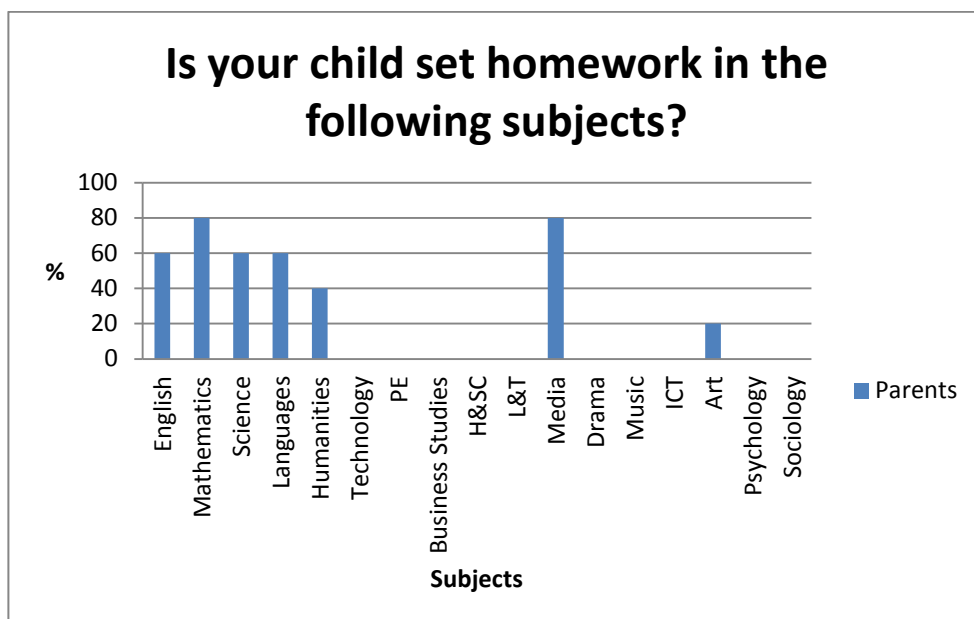


Figure 3.27 Frequency chart – Is your child set homework in the following subjects?

Table 3.27 Frequency chart – Is your child set homework in the following subjects?

	Parents
English	60
Mathematics	80
Science	60
Languages	60
Humanities	40
Technology	0
PE	0
Business Studies	0
H&SC	0
L&T	0
Media	80
Drama	0
Music	0
ICT	0
Art	20
Psychology	0
Sociology	0

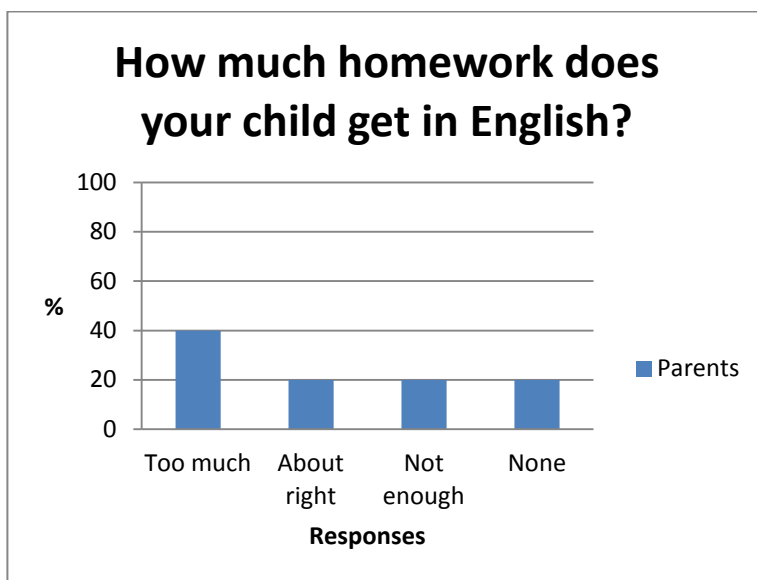


Figure 3.28 Frequency chart – How much homework does your child get in English?

Table 3.28 Frequency chart – How much homework does your child get in English?

	Parents
Too much	40
About right	20
Not enough	20
None	20

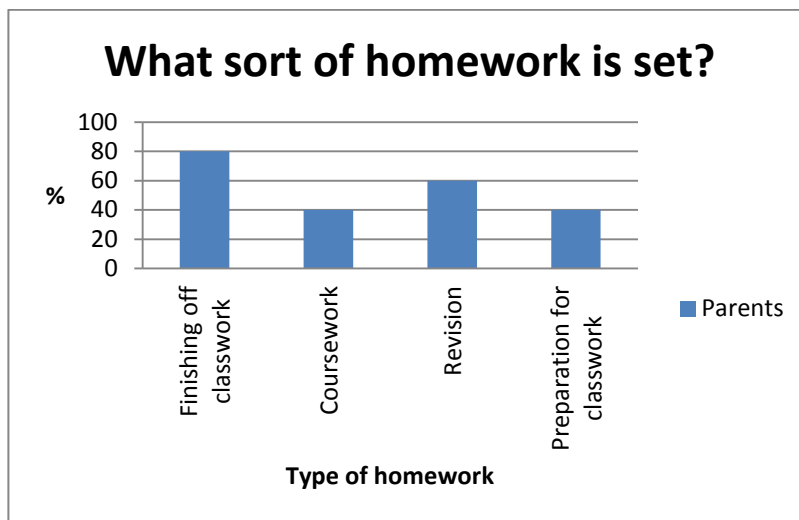


Figure 3.29 Frequency chart – What sort of homework is set?

Table 3.29 Frequency chart – What sort of homework is set?

	Parents
Finishing off classwork	80
Coursework	40
Revision	60
Preparation for classwork	40

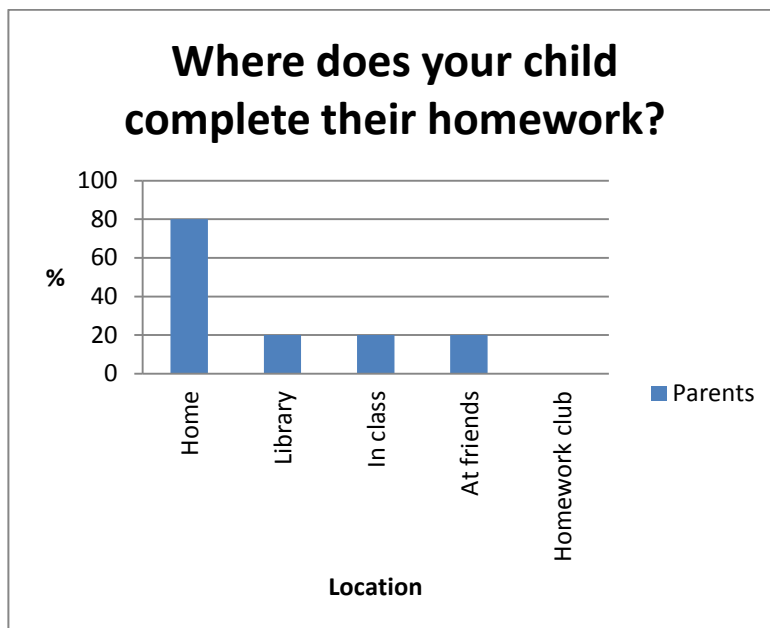


Figure 3.30 Frequency chart – Where does your child complete their homework?

Table 3.30 Frequency chart – Where does your child complete their homework?

	Parents
Home	80
Library	20
In class	20
At friends	20
Homework club	0

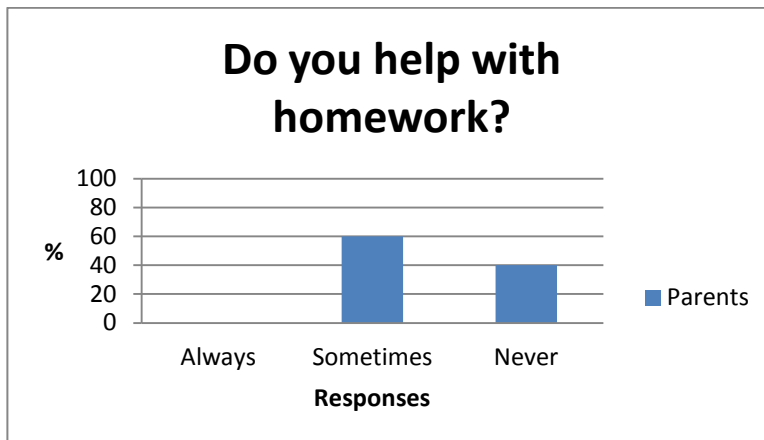


Figure 3.31 Frequency chart – Do you help with homework?

Table 3.32 Frequency chart – Do you help with homework?

	Parents
Always	0
Sometimes	60
Never	40

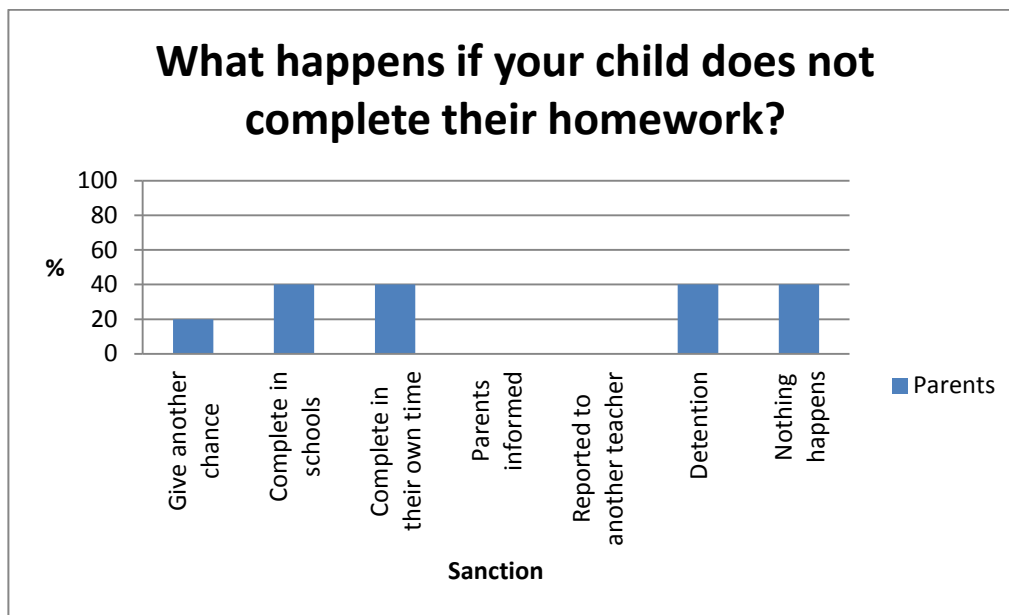


Figure 3.32 Frequency chart – What happens if your child does not complete their homework?

Table 3.32 Frequency chart – What happens if your child does not complete their homework?

	Parents
Give another chance	20
Complete in schools	40
Complete in their own time	40
Parents informed	0
Reported to another teacher	0
Detention	40
Nothing happens	40

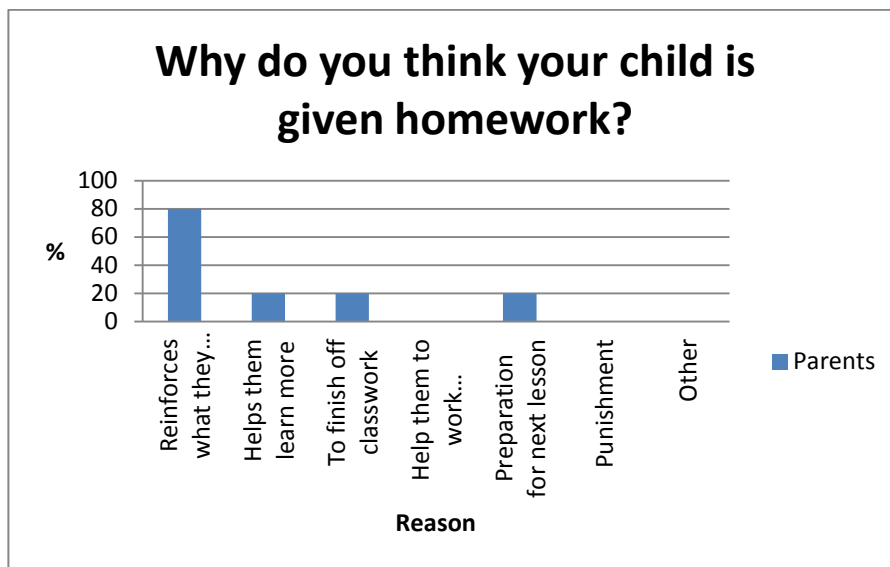


Figure 3.33 Frequency chart – Why do you think your child is given homework?

Table 3.33 Frequency chart – Why do you think your child is given homework?

	Parents
Reinforces what they have done in class	80
Helps you learn more	20
To finish off classwork	20
Help them to work independently	0
Preparation for next lesson	20
Punishment	0
Other	0

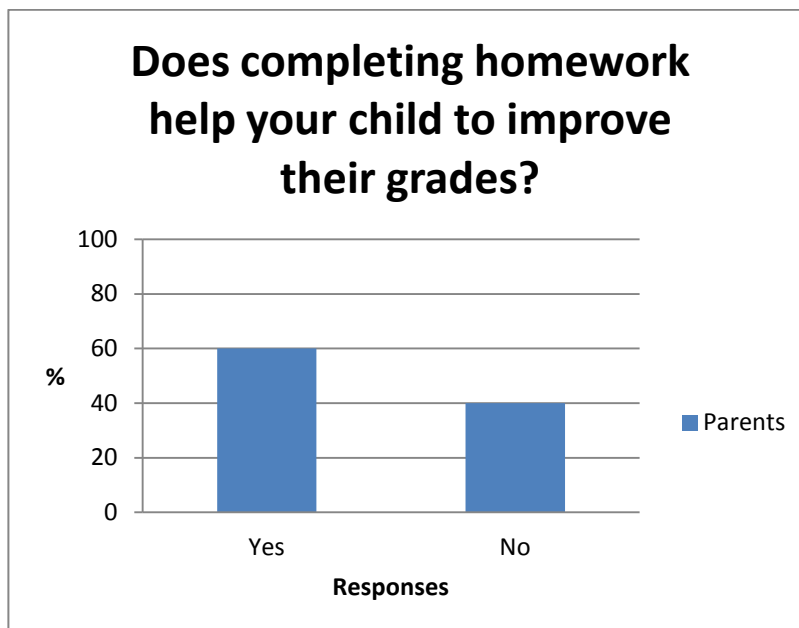


Figure 3.34 Frequency chart – Does completing homework help your child to improve their grades?

Table 3.34 Frequency chart – Does completing homework help your child to improve their grades?

	Parents
Yes	60
No	40

Appendix 20: Pilot Study Teacher Questionnaire Results

Results Homework – Teachers

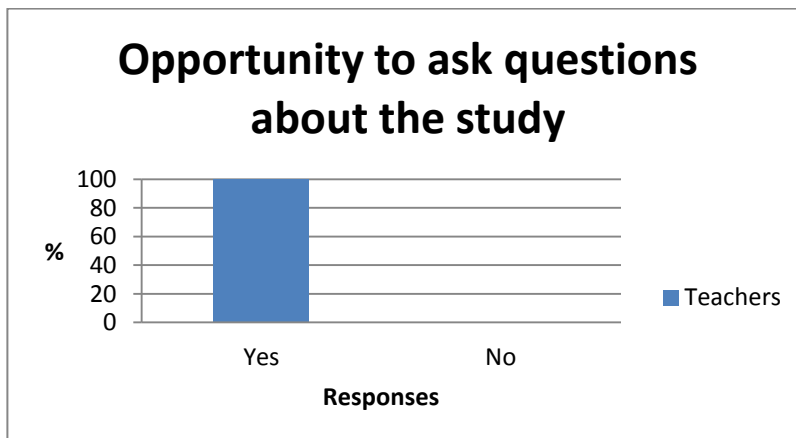


Figure 3.35 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

Table 3.35 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

	Teachers
Yes	100
No	0

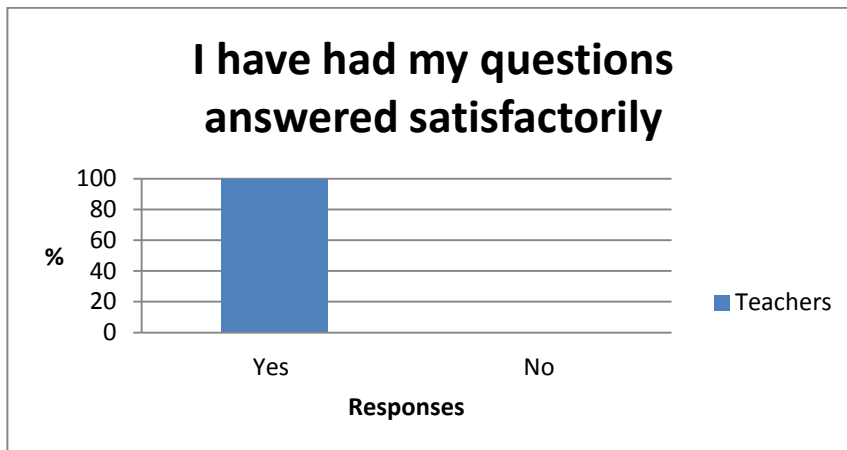


Figure 3.36 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

Table 3.36 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

	Teachers
Yes	100
No	0

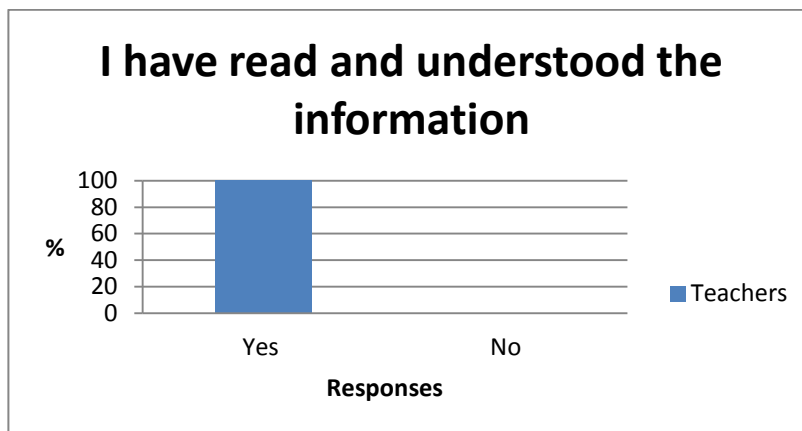


Figure 3.37 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

Table 3.37 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

	Teachers
Yes	100
No	0

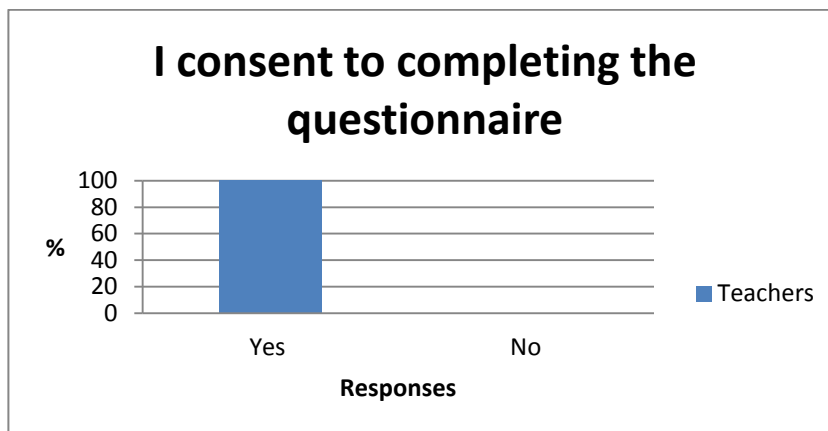


Figure 3.38 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

Table 3.38 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

	Teachers
Yes	100
No	0

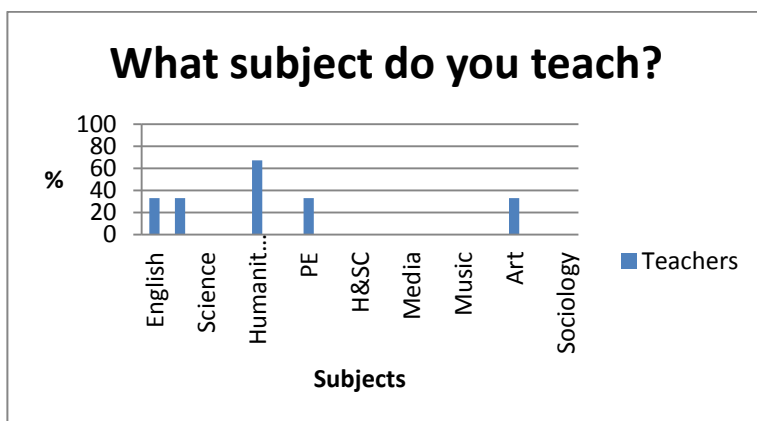


Figure 3.39 Frequency chart – What subject do you teach?

Table 3.39 Frequency chart – What subject do you teach?

	Teachers
English	33
Mathematics	33
Science	0
Languages	0
Humanities	67
Technology	0
PE	33
Business Studies	0
H&SC	0
L&T	0
Media	0
Drama	0
Music	0
ICT	0
Art	33
Psychology	0
Sociology	0

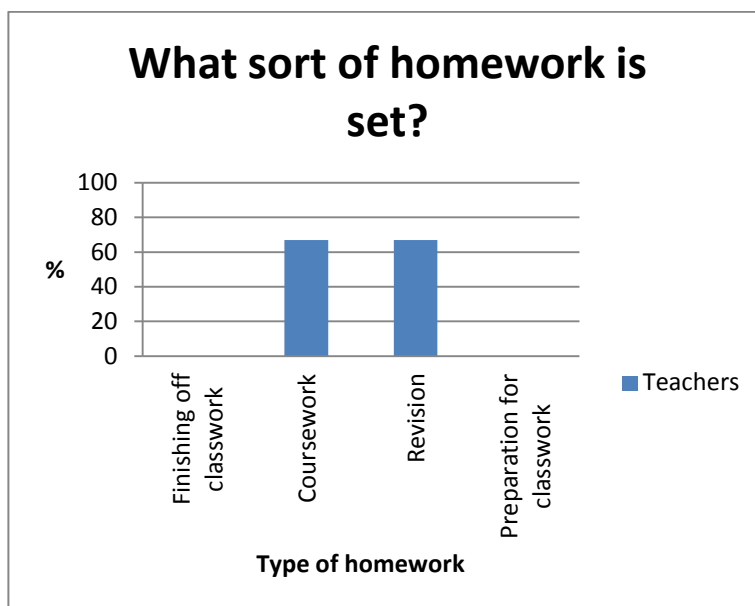


Figure 3.40 Frequency chart – What sort of homework is set?

Table 3.40 Frequency chart – What sort of homework is set?

	Teachers
Finishing off classwork	0
Coursework	67
Revision	67
Preparation for classwork	0

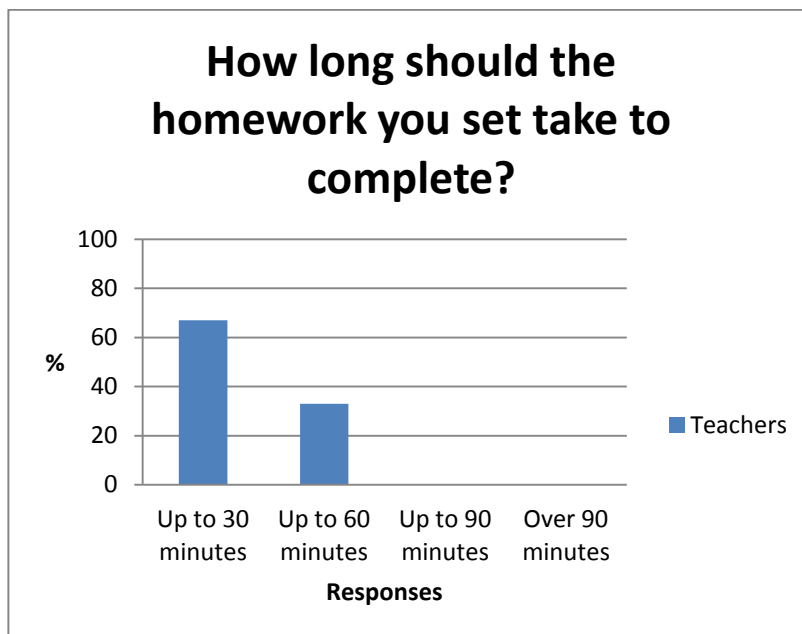


Figure 3.42 Frequency chart – How long should the homework you set take to complete?

Table 3.43 Frequency chart – How long should the homework you set take to complete?

	Teachers
Up to 30 minutes	67
Up to 60 minutes	33
Up to 90 minutes	0
Over 90 minutes	0

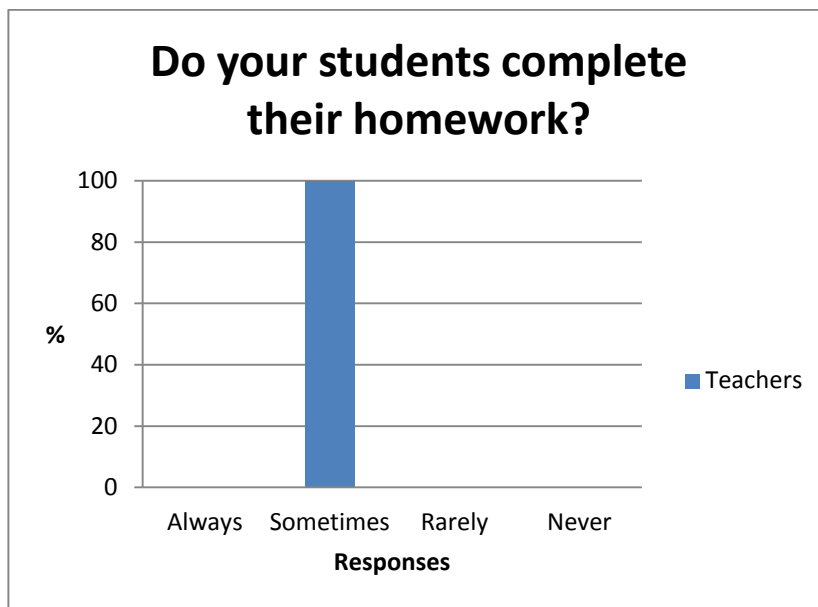


Figure 3.42 Frequency chart – Do your students complete their homework?

Table 3.42 Frequency chart – Do your students complete their homework?

	Teachers
Always	0
Sometimes	100
Rarely	0
Never	0

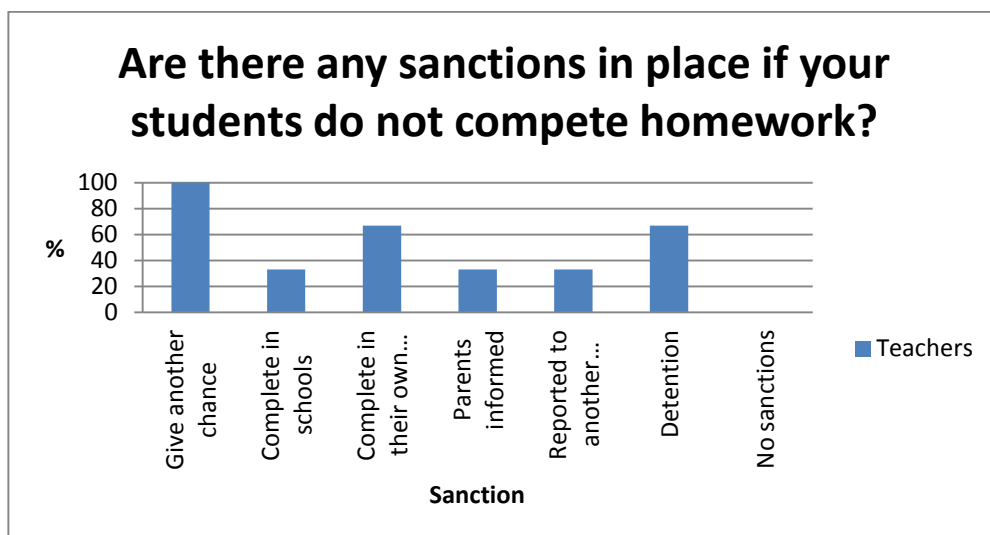


Figure 3.43 Frequency chart – Are there any sanctions in place if your students do not complete homework?

Table 3.43 Frequency chart – Are there any sanctions in place if your students do not complete homework?

	Teachers
Give another chance	100
Complete in schools	33
Complete in their own time	67
Parents informed	33
Reported to another teacher	33
Detention	67
No sanctions	0

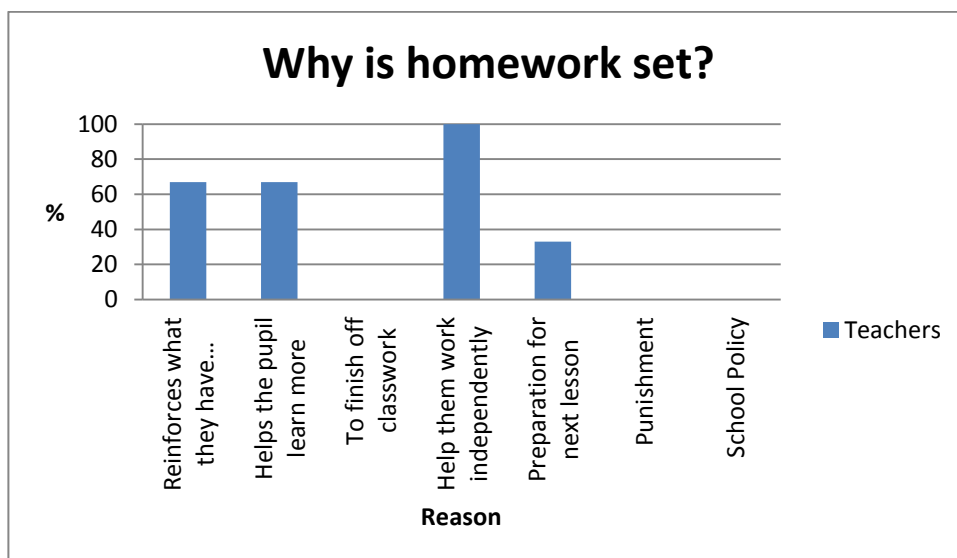


Figure 3.44 Frequency chart – Why is homework set?

Table 3.44 Frequency chart – Why is homework set?

	Teachers
Reinforces what they have done in class	67
Helps the pupil learn more	67
To finish off classwork	0
Help them work independently	100
Preparation for next lesson	33
Punishment	0
School Policy	0

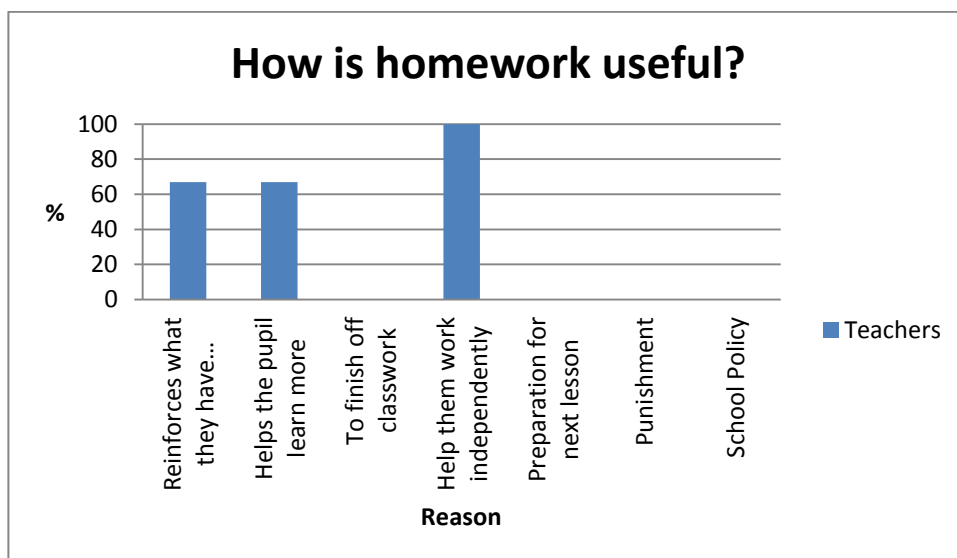


Figure 3.45 Frequency chart – How is homework useful?

Table 3.45 Frequency chart – How is homework useful?

	Teachers
Reinforces what they have done in class	67
Helps the pupil learn more	67
To finish off classwork	0
Help them work independently	100
Preparation for next lesson	0
Punishment	0
School Policy	0

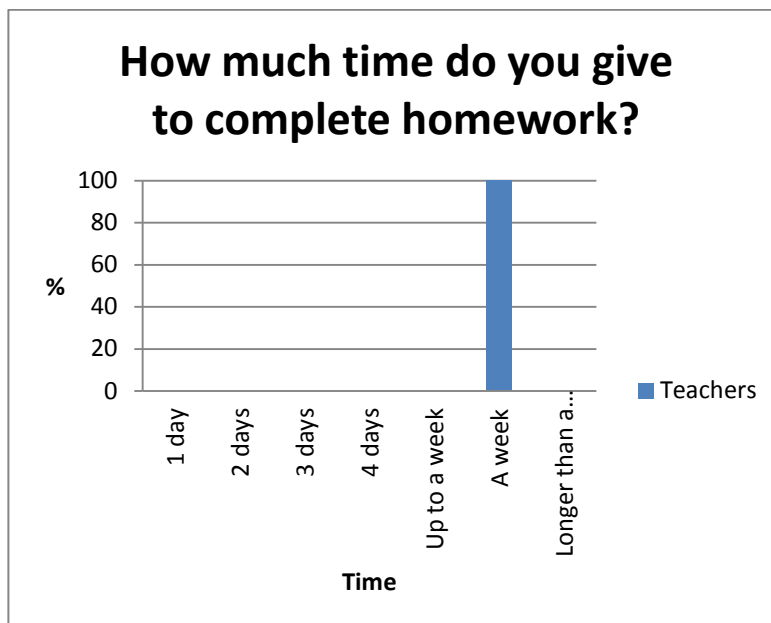


Figure 3.46 Frequency chart – How much time do you give to complete homework?

Table 3.46 Frequency chart – How much time do you give to complete homework?

	Teachers
1 day	0
2 days	0
3 days	0
4 days	0
Up to a week	0
A week	100
Longer than a week	0

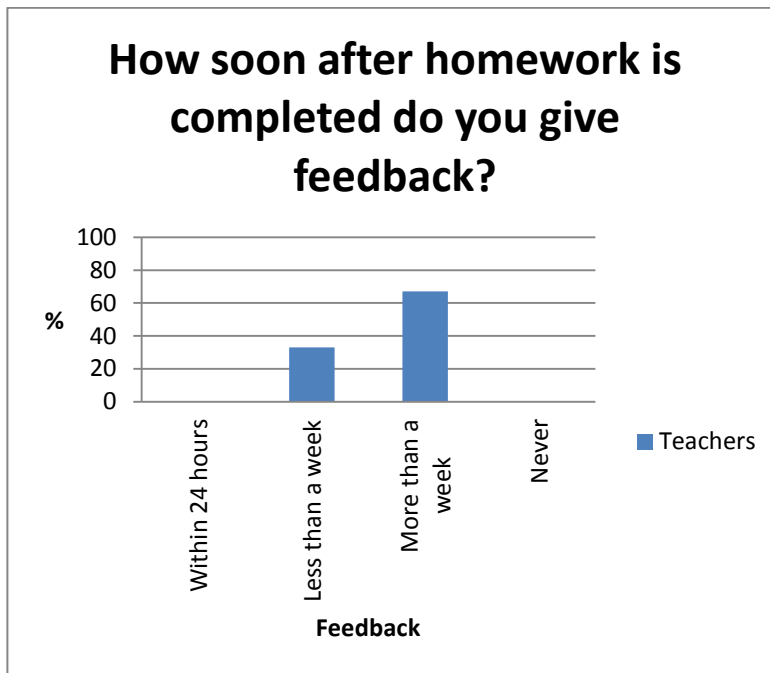


Figure 3.47 Frequency chart – How soon after homework is completed do you give feedback?

Table 3.47 Frequency chart – How soon after homework is completed do you give feedback?

	Teachers
Within 24 hours	0
Less than a week	33
More than a week	67
Never	0

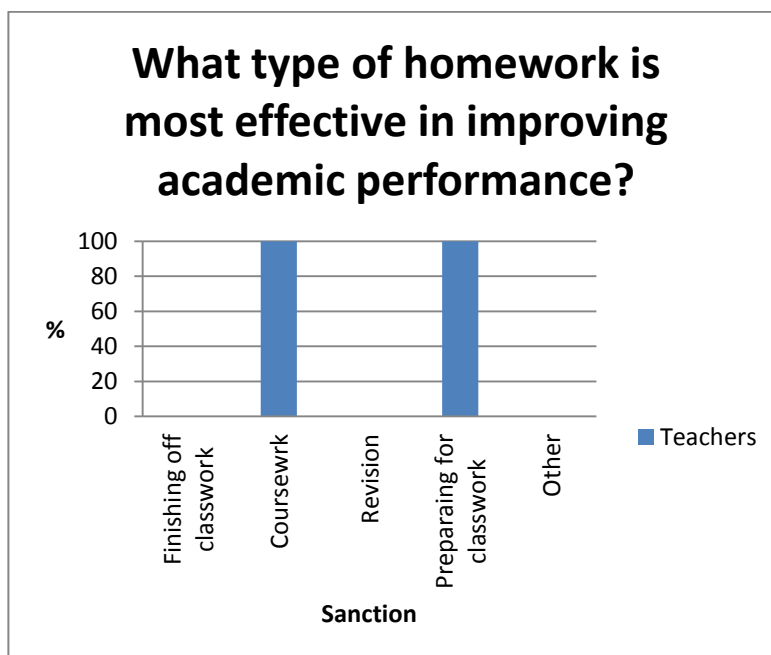


Figure 3.48 Frequency chart – What type of homework is most effective in improving academic performance?

Table 3.48 Frequency chart – What type of homework is most effective in improving academic performance?

	Teachers
Finishing off classwork	0
Coursework	100
Revision	0
Preparing for classwork	100
Other	0

Appendix 21: Pilot Study Governor Questionnaire Results

Results Homework – Governor

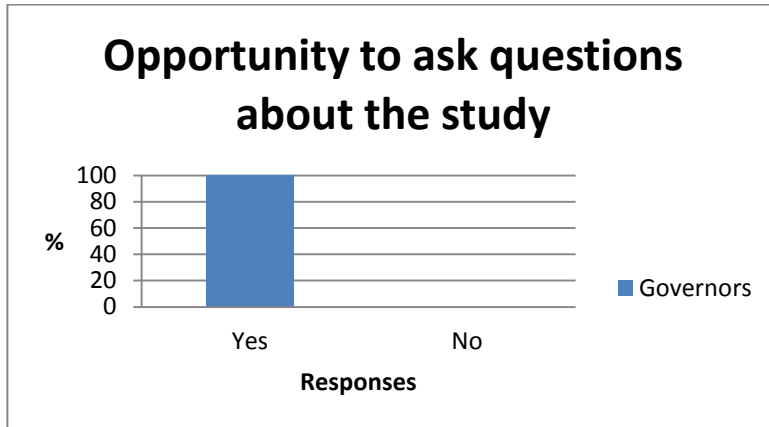


Figure 3.49 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

Table 3.49 Frequency chart – Opportunity to ask questions about the study

	Governors
Yes	100
No	0

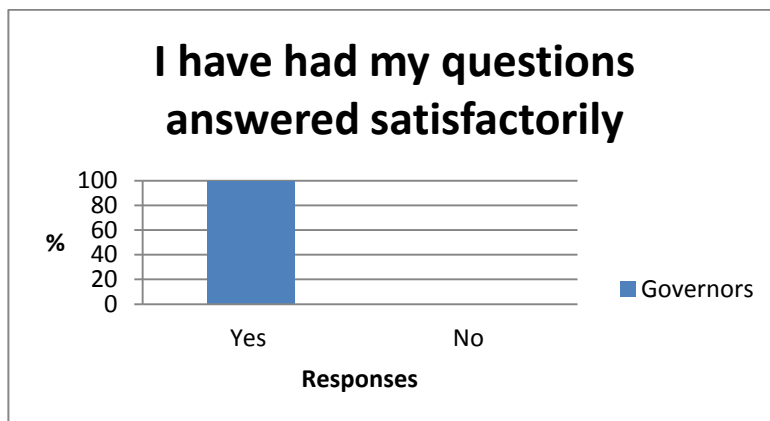


Figure 3.50 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

Table 3.50 Frequency chart – I have had my questions answered satisfactorily

	Governors
Yes	100
No	0

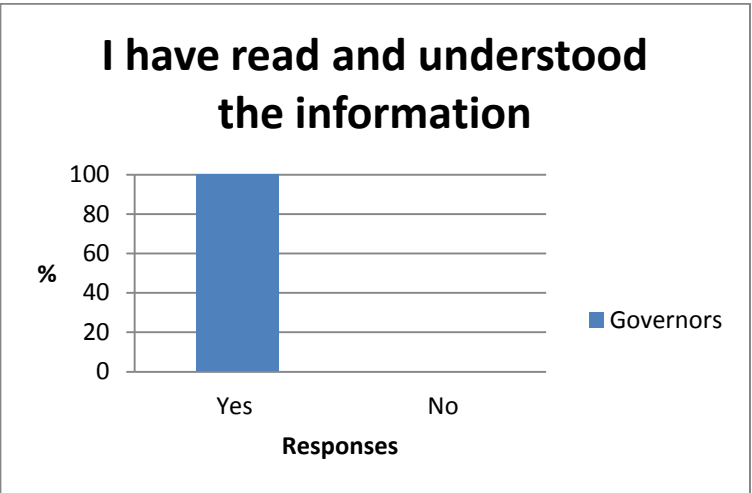


Figure 3.51 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

Table 3.51 Frequency chart – I have read and understood the information

	Governors
Yes	100
No	0

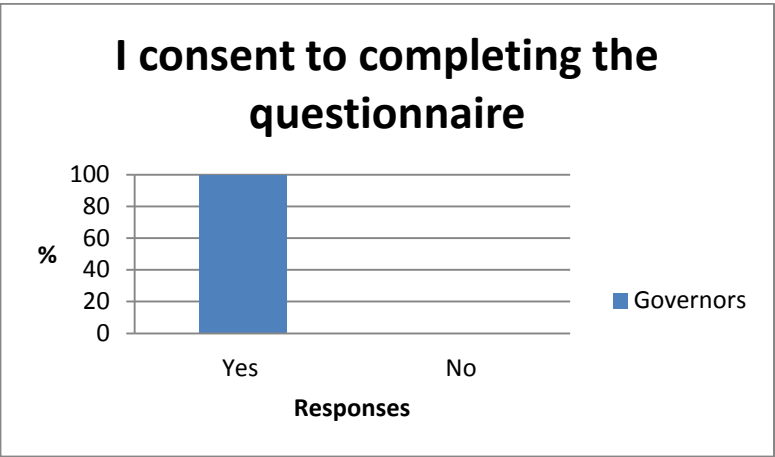


Figure 3.52 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

Table 3.52 Frequency chart – I consent to completing the questionnaire

	Governors
Yes	100
No	0

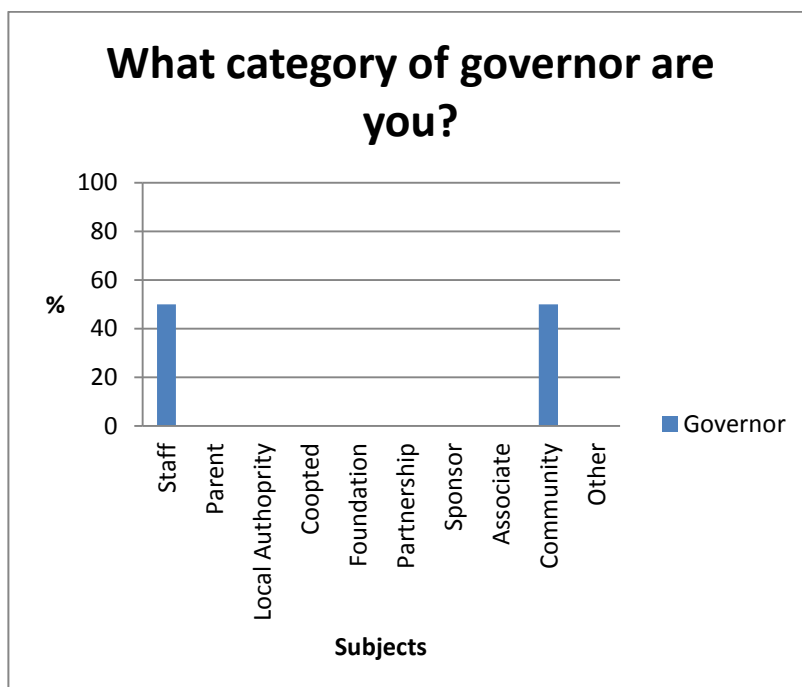


Figure 3.53 Frequency chart – What category of governor are you?

Table 3.53 Frequency chart – What category of governor are you?

	Governor
Staff	50
Parent	0
Local Authority	0
Co-opted	0
Foundation	0
Partnership	0
Sponsor	0
Associate	0
Community	50
Other	0

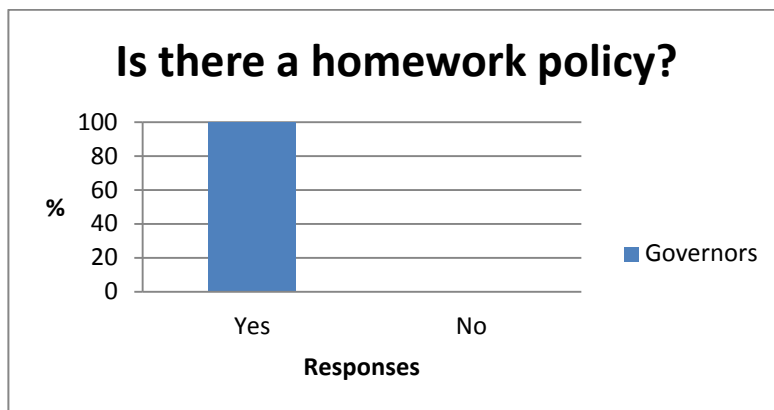


Figure 3.54 Frequency chart – Is there a homework policy?

Table 3.54 Frequency chart – Is there a homework policy?

	Governors
Yes	100
No	0

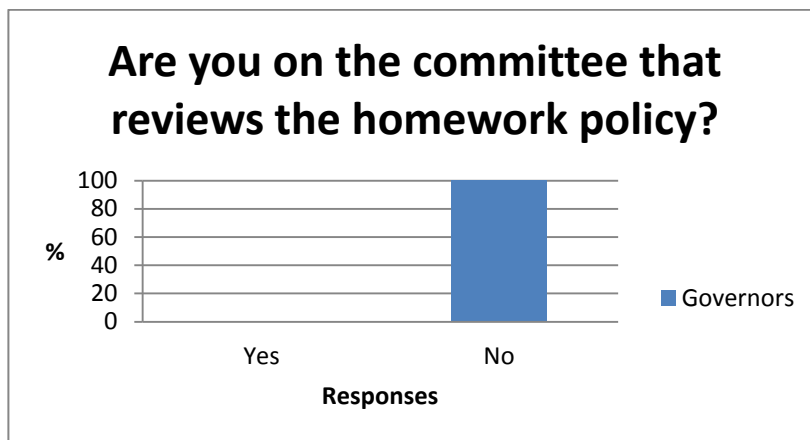


Figure 3.55 Frequency chart – Are you on the committee that reviews the homework policy?

Table 3.55 Frequency chart – Are you on the committee that reviews the homework policy?

	Governors
Yes	0
No	100

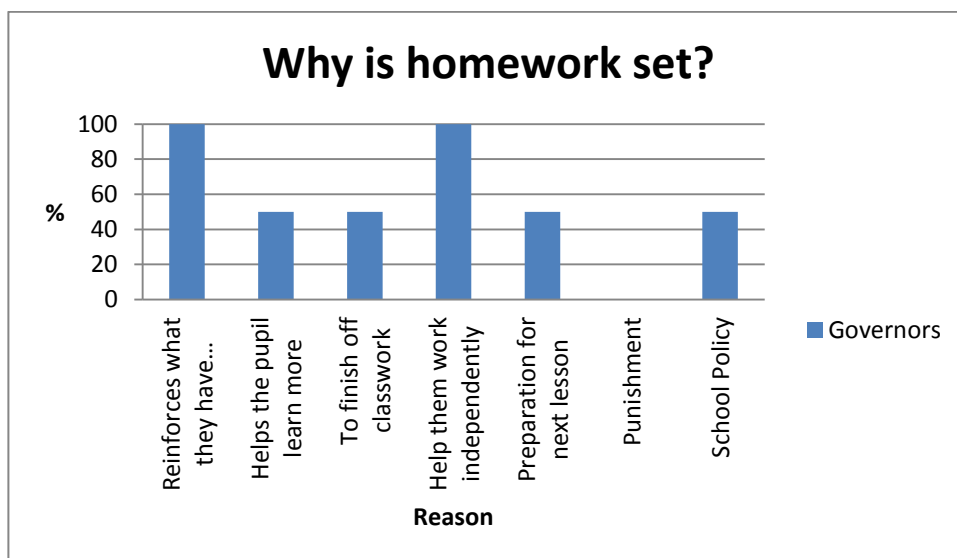


Figure 3.56 Frequency chart – Why is homework set?

Table 3.56 Frequency chart – Why is homework set?

	Governors
Reinforces what they have done in class	100
Helps the pupil learn more	50
To finish off classwork	50
Help them work independently	100
Preparation for next lesson	50
Punishment	0
School Policy	50

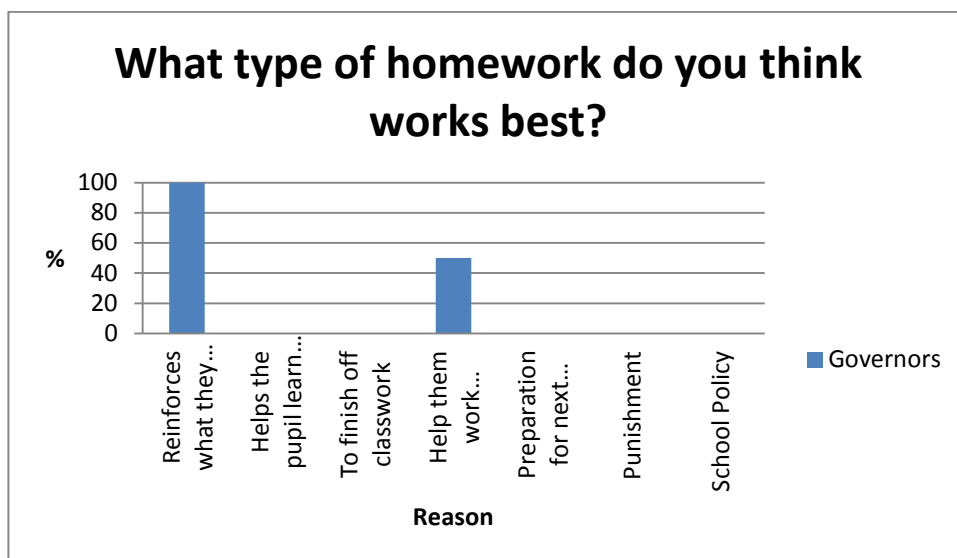


Figure 3.57 Frequency chart – What type of homework do you think works best?

Table 3.57 Frequency chart – What type of homework do you think works best?

	Governors
Reinforces what they have done in class	100
Helps the pupil learn more	0
To finish off classwork	0
Help them work independently	50
Preparation for next lesson	0
Punishment	0
School Policy	0

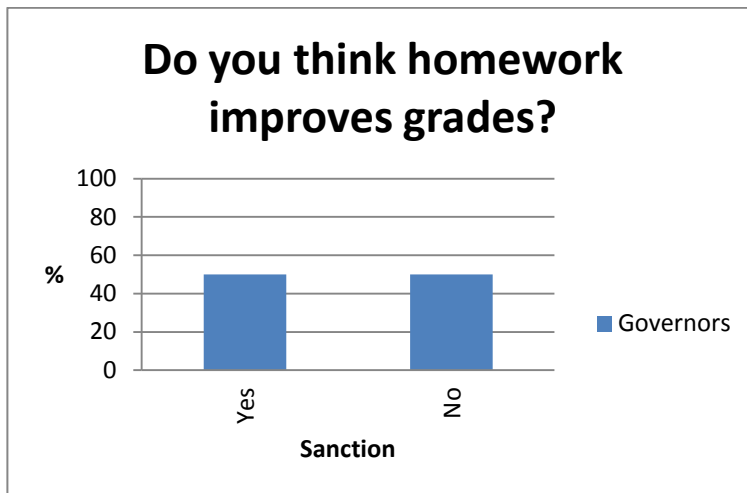


Figure 3.58 Frequency chart – Do you think homework improves grades?

Table 3.58 Frequency chart – Do you think homework improves grades?

	Governors
Yes	50
No	50

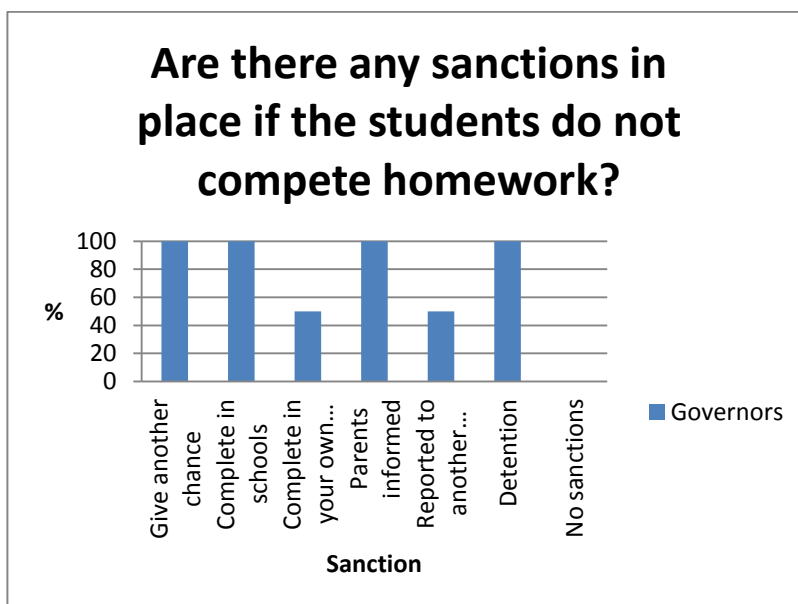


Figure 3.59 Frequency chart – Are there any sanctions in place if the students do not complete homework?

Table 3.59 Frequency chart – Are there any sanctions in place if the students do not complete homework?

	Governors
Give another chance	100
Complete in schools	100
Complete in their own time	50
Parents informed	100
Reported to another teacher	50
Detention	100
No sanctions	0

Appendix 22: Pilot Study Questionnaire Findings

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were given to eighteen year ten students, fourteen governors, twenty members of staff and the families of all eighteen students involved in the study. As the number of returned questions was low, therefore the sample size was small, all figures have been reported as raw figures.

Governor Questionnaires

The categories of governors taking part in the study were community and staff governors. Fourteen questionnaires were sent to governors but only two were returned. The governors were aware that the school had a homework policy however they were not on the committee responsible for reviewing and implementing the policy. Although they thought that homework was set for reinforcing class work, helping the students to learn, finishing off classwork, helping the students to work independently, preparing for the next lesson and because it was school policy. They thought that the type of homework set should be reinforcing classwork and helping the students to work independently. The governors were divided in their opinions that homework would improve grades. The staff governor thought homework did improve grades whereas the community governor did not think it improved grades. Although they were aware that sanctions were in place for non-completion of homework they were not fully aware of what these were. It is stated in the school homework policy that the governors were responsible for monitoring homework when they conduct their monitoring visit of the school. They should see evidence that homework was set and assessed. Although these governors were not on the committee monitoring the policy they would have been undertaking school visits.

Staff Questionnaires

Questionnaires were given to twenty teachers at the school but only three were returned. The staff taking part in the study taught all year groups including year ten. One teacher taught Art, the second taught Humanities and the third taught a range of subjects including English, Mathematics, Humanities and Physical Education. When asked what sort of homework was set the member of staff teaching art set coursework and preparation for classwork, the humanities teacher set coursework and revision and the teacher who taught a number of subjects set revision and themed projects. They set homework to reinforce class work, to help students learn more and to help them work independently. However, when asked what type of homework is most effective in improving academic performance, the art teacher indicated that the homework set did improve performance. The other two teachers felt that independently learning and profiling or answering questions improved performance and not the type of homework they set. Two teachers set homework for up to thirty minutes while the art teacher set it for up to sixty minutes. They all gave the students a week to complete their homework but it could be up to two weeks before the art and humanities teachers gave feedback. They all felt that students usually completed their homework. The sanctions they stated were in place were in line with those stated in the school policy, however they all indicated a range of different sanctions. The school homework policy stated that homework should be differentiated, this is possibly achieved through the students completing their independent coursework. Although the responses were in line with the school homework policy the teachers were not given further opportunity to comment on the policy.

Family Questionnaires

The eighteen students were asked to take a questionnaire to their families but only ten took a questionnaire and only five were returned. The returned

questionnaires were all from families of white British origin, two were men and three women. Three had children on the Gifted and Talented register, one parent did not know and one parent was not sure if their child was on the register. Two families knew that their children were in set one for English and three indicated that their child was not in a set for English, (there was only a set one and the rest were in mixed ability groups, and that they did not get additional support in the subject. Subjects in which their children were set homework were identified as English, Mathematics, Science, Languages, Humanities, Media and Art but this depended on the subject studied at Key Stage Four. Two families felt that the students were set too much homework with one stating about right, one not enough and one stating that their child did not get any homework. The majority of families thought that their child was given homework to finish class work, revision, coursework or preparing for class work. Families were asked where their child completed homework, the majority completed homework at home, the remainder completed homework in the library, in class or with friends. This indicated that families may not easily be able to monitor if homework was completed. Three families helped their child sometimes with homework and two did not help at all. Families are aware that sanctions are in place if homework is not completed but not fully aware of those identified in the school policy. When asked why homework was set, families stated that it reinforces class work, helps the child learn, it finishes class work and prepares for the next lesson. Families did feel that completing homework did help their child to improve grades in school.

Although families in this study wanted to support their children, for many they found that some subjects posed more difficulty than others for them to give support. From this study further questions can be asked and in particular of the parent whether they do the homework for their children and why they do it.

Student Questionnaires

Eighteen year ten students were asked to complete the questionnaire. The group was made up of twelve boys and six girls, seventeen were of white British origin and one refused to give the information. Nine knew they were on the gifted and talented register, while five did not know if they were on it. Only one student was in set one for English with the rest in mixed ability groups. The majority of them did not have additional support in this subject. They stated that they were set homework in English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities, Languages, Technology, Physical Education, Media and Art. The students were asked how much homework was set and this differed between subjects from ten minutes to ninety minutes. Ten felt that they were set the right amount of homework in English, one felt they had too much and seven said that they were not set any homework. The type of homework set was finishing class work, coursework, revision and preparing for class work. Most students complete their homework at home with others completing in the library, in class or with friends. Some families help all the time with most students having occasional help and only a few not having any help. The majority of students are given up to a week to complete homework but in some cases it can be between one day and longer than a week. Seven students stated that nothing happens if they do not complete their homework, the rest said they were given another chance, completed it in school, completed it in their own time, their families were informed and they were given detention. The students are the only group questioned who felt that homework was set as a punishment. The students stated that feedback could be between twenty-four hours and more than a week and in some cases they did not get feedback.

Discussion

This study showed that there was a homework policy in place which was regularly reviewed by the curriculum governors committee who then report to

the full governors. Teachers stated that they set homework which appeared to be line with school policy but when students were asked about the homework set it this was not the case and homework was at times not set and not for the recommended length of time. The policy stated what sanctions were in place for not completing homework and although governors and teachers stated that sanctions were adhered to families and students stated that at times no sanctions were given. Again there was a discrepancy between staff and students about the length of time they were given to complete homework and when feedback was given. Students said that they could be given one or two days up to a week or longer to complete homework whereas teachers said that they are given a week to complete homework. Students stated that feedback could be anything from twenty-four hours to more than a week but in some cases they were never given feedback whereas teachers stated that they gave feedback. The school policy stated that sixty to ninety minutes per subject per week should be set and at least two days to complete it and feedback should be given as soon as possible. Those questioned were fairly evenly split between those who thought homework improved grades and those who did not. Three of the main stakeholders in the involvement of homework are the teachers, families and students and each had a differing outlook on the purpose of it.

Implications of the study

The intention of this study was to address the question of the purpose and relevance of homework in state secondary education from the point of view of all stakeholders. It was found that all stakeholders should be involved in all aspects of homework. The governors must have a policy in place which is relevant to the current curriculum and is regularly reviewed in light of new government policy and initiatives. They must take responsibility for monitoring homework, not necessarily carrying this out themselves but through delegation. They are responsible for the education of the students in

their school. Schools should provide alternative space and setting for homework to be completed, not necessarily after school but during breaks in the school day. Teachers must follow the school policy and set appropriate tasks, monitor homework is written down, give time for it to be completed, mark and give timely and formative feedback. This should be monitored by the head of department or curriculum leader. Data should be kept on who is not completing homework and for what reason so that appropriate action can be taken. That could include changing the type of task given and when it is set. Although a home-school agreement was in place and parents were consulted it should have been the case that students were also consulted and signed the agreement. Parents must take responsibility for supporting the children by providing time and space and if this is not available, to ensure that the student attends a homework club at the school. The student must take responsibility for their own learning and if the governors, teachers and families play their part it will give the student the opportunity to fulfil their part in the process.

Appendix 23: Main Study Students Questionnaire

INFORMATION SHEET FOR YEAR 10 STUDENTS

“Should Schools Set Homework?”

Mrs Wendy Edwards is a student studying for her Doctorate in Education at the University of Bedfordshire. She is currently carrying out a study looking at should schools set homework and if they do set homework what sort of homework should be set.

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire which should only take around 15 minutes to complete. Questionnaires are also being given to teachers, parents and governors. **All questionnaires are anonymous.** Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. All data that is collected will be confidential and anonymised to protect the names of the schools and individuals. It will be made available only to Mrs Edwards’ supervisors, will be kept in a password protected electronic file and will be destroyed at the end of the research project.

Any report or publication will be shared with the participating schools. The anticipated date for completion of the project is 2015

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions.

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* Required

1 I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </div>
2 I have had my questions answered satisfactorily * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </div>
3 I have read and understood the information above * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </div>
4 I consent to completing the questionnaire. * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </div>
5 Are you male or female? * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female </div>
6 What is your ethnic origin? * <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> White British</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Indian</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Chinese</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> White Irish</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Pakistani</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Other Asian</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Other White Background</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Background</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Black or Black British Caribbean</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Other Mixed Background</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Black or Black British African Caribbean</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black African</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Other Ethnic Background</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Other Black Background</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Asian</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="radio"/> Information refused</div> </div>
7 Are you on the Gifted and Talented Register? * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know </div>
8 What is your first language? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> English <input type="radio"/> Other - please state </div>
9 Do you get additional support in English? * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </div>
10 Which set are you in for English? * <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Set 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not in a set </div>
Your View of the Value of Homework

11 Do you think homework should be set?			
<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No		
12 Why are you given homework?			
<input type="radio"/> Reinforces what you have done in class	<input type="radio"/> Helps you learn more		
<input type="radio"/> To finish class work	<input type="radio"/> Helps you to work independently		
<input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson	<input type="radio"/> Punishment		
<input type="radio"/> Helps the teacher to cover all the work	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:		
13 Does completing homework help improve your grades?			
<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No		
14 Does completing homework help you understand your class work?			
<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No		
15 Does homework help you learn?			
<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No		
16 What sort of homework do you prefer? Tick as many boxes as you wish			
<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work	<input type="radio"/> Coursework	<input type="radio"/> Projects	<input type="radio"/> Revision
<input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:		
17 What sort of homework is important? Tick as many boxes as you wish			
<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work	<input type="radio"/> Coursework	<input type="radio"/> Projects	<input type="radio"/> Revision
<input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:		
Completion of Homework			
18 How much homework do you get on average every night?			
<input type="radio"/> Less than 30 minutes	<input type="radio"/> 30 minutes - 1 hour	<input type="radio"/> 1 - 1½ hours	
<input type="radio"/> 1½ - 2 hours	<input type="radio"/> More than 2 hours	<input type="radio"/> None	
19 In your opinion is this amount of homework?			
<input type="radio"/> Too much	<input type="radio"/> About right	<input type="radio"/> Not enough	<input type="radio"/> None

<p>20 How much time are you given to complete homework?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> 1 day <input type="radio"/> 2 days <input type="radio"/> 3 days <input type="radio"/> 4 days <input type="radio"/> Up to a week <input type="radio"/> A week <input type="radio"/> Longer than a week </p>		
<p>21 How soon after you have handed homework in do you get feedback?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Within 24 hours <input type="radio"/> Less than a week <input type="radio"/> More than a week <input type="radio"/> Never </p>		
<p>22 What sort of homework do you find the most difficult to complete?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: </p>		
<p>23 Which subject do find most difficult to complete homework in? Please state:</p>		
<p>24 If you complete your homework at home when do you do it?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Earlier than 3pm <input type="radio"/> 3pm - 5pm <input type="radio"/> 5pm - 7pm <input type="radio"/> 7pm - 9pm <input type="radio"/> Later than 9pm <input type="radio"/> Before School <input type="radio"/> At the weekend </p>		
<p>25 Does homework cause you stress?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </p>		
<p>26 Does homework affect the activities you do at home with your family?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </p>		
<p>Subject Specific Homework</p>		
<p>Are you set homework in the following subjects? Tick as many boxes as apply</p>		
<p>27 Subject</p>	<p>How long does each homework take you in minutes</p>	<p>What sort of homework is set? Tick as many boxes as you wish</p>

<input type="radio"/> English		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Mathematics		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Science - Biology, Chemistry, Physics		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Humanities - History, Geography, RE		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Physical Education		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Drama		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Music		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> ICT		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Business Studies		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please

		state:
<input type="radio"/> Art		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Languages		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Design Technology		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
Resources for Completing Homework		
28 Is there a Homework Club at school?		
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know		
29 Where do you complete your homework? Tick as many boxes as you wish		
<input type="radio"/> Home <input type="radio"/> Library <input type="radio"/> In class <input type="radio"/> At friends <input type="radio"/> Homework Club <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:		
30 If you complete homework at home where do you work?		
State which room -		
31 When you are completing your homework do you...? Tick as many as you want		
<input type="radio"/> Work in the same room as other people <input type="radio"/> Work in the same room as the television <input type="radio"/> Have the television on <input type="radio"/> Have music playing <input type="radio"/> Prefer to work quietly <input type="radio"/> Prefer to work on your own		
32 Do you need help with your homework?		
<input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never		
33 Do you get help with homework from someone at home?		
<input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never		
34 If you do get help with homework from someone at home who helps you?		

<p>35 What resources do you have at home to help you to complete your homework? Tick as many as you want.</p> <div> <input type="radio"/> Computer <input type="radio"/> Television <input type="radio"/> Books from home </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Worksheets from school <input type="radio"/> Books from school <input type="radio"/> Other - please state: </div>			
<p align="center">Punishments for Non-Completion of Homework</p>			
<p>36 What happens if you don't complete the homework? Tick as many boxes as you wish</p> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school <input type="checkbox"/> Detention </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in your own time <input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed <input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state: </div>			
<p>37 In your view do these punishments work?</p> <div> <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Rarely <input type="radio"/> Never </div>			
<p align="center">Homework Policy</p>			
<p>38 Do you record homework in a planner?</p> <div> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know </div>			
<p>39 If yes who checks your planner?</p> <div> <input type="radio"/> Subject Teacher <input type="radio"/> Form Tutor <input type="radio"/> Parents </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Someone else - Please state who </div>			
<p>40 Is there a Home-School Agreement?</p> <div> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know </div>			

Appendix 24: Main Study Families Questionnaire

INFORMATION SHEET FOR FAMILIES OF YEAR 10 STUDENTS

“Should Schools Set Homework?”

Mrs Wendy Edwards is a student studying for her Doctorate in Education at the University of Bedfordshire. She is currently carrying out a study looking at should schools set homework and if they do set homework what sort of homework should be set.

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire which should only take around 15 minutes to complete. Questionnaires are also being given to students, teachers and governors. **All questionnaires are anonymous.** Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. All data that is collected will be confidential and anonymised to protect the names of the schools and individuals. It will be made available only to Mrs Edwards’ supervisors, will be kept in a password protected electronic file and will be destroyed at the end of the research project.

Any report or publication will be shared with the participating schools. The anticipated date for completion of the project is 2015

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions.

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* Required

1 I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
2 I have had my questions answered satisfactorily *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
3 I have read and understood the information above *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
4 I consent to completing the questionnaire. *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
5 Are you male or female? *
<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
6 What is your ethnic origin? *
<div> <input type="radio"/> White British <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Indian <input type="radio"/> Chinese </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> White Irish <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Pakistani <input type="radio"/> Other Asian Background </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Other White Background <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British <input type="radio"/> Other Mixed Background </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Black or Black British <input type="radio"/> Bangladeshi <input type="radio"/> Other Ethnic Background </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Caribbean <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black <input type="radio"/> Information refused </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Black or Black British African <input type="radio"/> Caribbean </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Other Black Background <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black African </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Asian </div>
7 What is your first language? *
<input type="radio"/> English <input type="radio"/> Other - please state
8 Is your year 10 child on the Gifted and Talented Register?
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know
9 Does your year 10 child get additional support in English?
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know
10 Which set is your year 10 child in for English?
<input type="checkbox"/> Set 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Set 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not in a set <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
11 Is your year 10 child set homework in the following subjects? Tick as many boxes as applicable

<input type="radio"/> English <input type="radio"/> Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) <input type="radio"/> Humanities (History, Geography, RE) <input type="radio"/> Physical Education <input type="radio"/> Mathematics	<input type="radio"/> Drama <input type="radio"/> Music <input type="radio"/> ICT <input type="radio"/> Business Studies <input type="radio"/> Art	<input type="radio"/> Languages <input type="radio"/> Design Technology <input type="radio"/> Don't know <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
Your View of the Value of Homework		
12 Should homework be set? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know		
13 What sort of homework is set? Tick as many boxes as applicable <input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work <input type="radio"/> Coursework <input type="radio"/> Projects <input type="radio"/> Revision <input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:		
14 Why do you think your year 10 child is given homework? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class <input type="radio"/> To finish class work <input type="radio"/> Preparation for next lesson <input type="radio"/> Helps the teacher to cover all the work <input type="radio"/> Other - please state where </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more <input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently <input type="radio"/> Punishment <input type="radio"/> Don't know </div> </div>		
15 Is homework a valuable aid to learning? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know		
16 Do you think completing homework helps your year 10 child improve their grades? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know		
17 Does completing homework help your year 10 child understand their class work? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know		

Completion of Homework

18 How much homework does your year 10 child get on average every night?

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes ☐ 30 minutes – 1 hour ☐ 1 - 1½ hours
☐ 1½ hours-2 hours ☐ More than 2 hours ☐ None

19 In your opinion is this amount of homework?

- ☐ Too much ☐ About right ☐ Not enough ☐ None

20 Does homework cause stress to your year 10 child?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

21 Does homework affect the activities your year 10 child does at home with the family?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes please say how:

Resources for Completing Homework

22 Is there a Homework Club?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

23 Where does your year 10 child complete their homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable

- ☐ Home ☐ Library ☐ In class ☐ At friends ☐ Homework Club
☐ Other - please state:

24 If your year 10 child completes homework at home where do they work?

State which room -

25 What resources do you have at home to help your year 10 child complete their homework? Tick as many as applicable.

<input type="radio"/> Computer <input type="radio"/> Worksheets from school	<input type="radio"/> Television <input type="radio"/> Books from school	<input type="radio"/> Books from home <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:									
26 Do you help your year child 10 with homework? <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never											
27 Do you have time to help your year 10 child with their homework? <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never											
28 Should you be expected to help your year 10 child with their homework? <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never											
29 Are you confident in helping your year 10 child with their homework? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No											
30 If no - could the school support you in helping your year 10 child with their homework? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No If yes - how could the school support you in helping your year 10 child with their homework?											
Punishments for non-completion of Homework											
31 What happens if your year 10 child does not complete their homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Detention</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Completed in your own time</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			<input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school	<input type="checkbox"/> Detention	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in your own time	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed	<input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school	<input type="checkbox"/> Detention									
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in your own time	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed	<input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher									
<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state:										
32 Do punishments work? <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Rarely <input type="radio"/> Never											

Homework Policy	
33 Is there a Homework Club?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know
34 Is homework recorded in a planner?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know
35 If yes who checks the planner?	<input type="radio"/> Subject Teacher <input type="radio"/> Form Tutor <input type="radio"/> Parents <input type="radio"/> Don't know <input type="radio"/> Someone else - Please state who
36 Is there a Homework Policy?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know
37 Is there a Home-School Agreement?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know
38 If yes do you know what is in the agreement?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Appendix 25: Main Study Teachers Questionnaire

INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS OF YEAR 10 STUDENTS ONLY

“Should Schools Set Homework?”

Mrs Wendy Edwards is a student studying for her Doctorate in Education at the University of Bedfordshire. She is currently carrying out a study looking at should schools set homework and if they do set homework what sort of homework should be set.

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire which should only take around 15 minutes to complete. Questionnaires are also being given to students, parents and governors. **All questionnaires are anonymous.** Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. All data that is collected will be confidential and anonymised to protect the names of the schools and individuals. It will be made available only to Mrs Edwards’ supervisors, will be kept in a password protected electronic file and will be destroyed at the end of the research project.

Any report or publication will be shared with the participating schools. The anticipated date for completion of the project is 2014

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions.

Investigator	Supervisor	Supervisor
Wendy Edwards	Prof. Janice Wearmouth	Prof. Uvanney Maylor
Dept. of Secondary Education	Dept of Education Studies	Dept of Education Studies
University of Bedfordshire	University of Bedfordshire	University of Bedfordshire
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MK41 9EA	MK41 9EA	MK41 9EA
01234 793047	01234 79 3153	01234 793378
wendy.edwards@beds.ac.uk	janice.wearmouth@beds.ac.uk	uvanney.maylor@beds.ac.uk

* Required

1 I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
2 I have had my questions answered satisfactorily *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
3 I have read and understood the information above *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
4 I consent to completing the questionnaire. *
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
5 Are you male or female? *
<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
6 How long have you been teaching? *
_____ years
7 What Higher Educational qualifications do you have? *
<input type="radio"/> PGCE <input type="radio"/> PgCE <input type="radio"/> QTS only <input type="radio"/> Certificate of Education <input type="radio"/> MA <input type="radio"/> MEd <input type="radio"/> PhD <input type="radio"/> EdD
8 What is your ethnic origin? *
<div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="radio"/> White British <input type="radio"/> White Irish <input type="radio"/> Other White Background <input type="radio"/> Black or Black British Caribbean <input type="radio"/> Black or Black British African <input type="radio"/> Other Black Background </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Indian <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Pakistani <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black Caribbean <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black African <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Asian </div> <div style="width: 33%;"> <input type="radio"/> Chinese <input type="radio"/> Other Asian Background <input type="radio"/> Other Mixed Background <input type="radio"/> Other Ethnic Background <input type="radio"/> Information refused </div> </div>
9 Do you teach your year 10 students in sets?
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
10 Do you set homework to your year 10 students?
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
11 What is the main subject you set homework in year 10?
Please state:
Your View of the Value of Homework

<p>12 In your opinion should homework be set?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>									
<p>13 Why do you set homework to your year 10 students? Tick as many boxes as applicable</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Reinforces what students have done in class</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Helps students learn more</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> To finish class work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Helps students to work independently</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Preparation for class work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Punishment</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Helps you to cover all the work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Other - please state:</td> </tr> </table>		<input type="radio"/> Reinforces what students have done in class	<input type="radio"/> Helps students learn more	<input type="radio"/> To finish class work	<input type="radio"/> Helps students to work independently	<input type="radio"/> Preparation for class work	<input type="radio"/> Punishment	<input type="radio"/> Helps you to cover all the work	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Reinforces what students have done in class	<input type="radio"/> Helps students learn more								
<input type="radio"/> To finish class work	<input type="radio"/> Helps students to work independently								
<input type="radio"/> Preparation for class work	<input type="radio"/> Punishment								
<input type="radio"/> Helps you to cover all the work	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:								
<p>14 Does completing homework help your year 10 students understand class work?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>									
<p>15 How is homework useful to your year 10 students? Please rank order with 1 the most useful.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> To finish class work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Preparation for class work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Punishment</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Helps you to cover all the work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Other - please state:</td> </tr> </table>		<input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class	<input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more	<input type="radio"/> To finish class work	<input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently	<input type="radio"/> Preparation for class work	<input type="radio"/> Punishment	<input type="radio"/> Helps you to cover all the work	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:
<input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class	<input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more								
<input type="radio"/> To finish class work	<input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently								
<input type="radio"/> Preparation for class work	<input type="radio"/> Punishment								
<input type="radio"/> Helps you to cover all the work	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:								
<p>16 Does completing homework help your year 10 students improve grades?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>									
<p>17 If yes - What type of homework is most effective in improving the academic performance of your year 10 students? Tick as many boxes as applicable</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Coursework</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Projects</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Revision</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork</td> <td colspan="3"><input type="radio"/> Other - please state:</td> </tr> </table>		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work	<input type="radio"/> Coursework	<input type="radio"/> Projects	<input type="radio"/> Revision	<input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:		
<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work	<input type="radio"/> Coursework	<input type="radio"/> Projects	<input type="radio"/> Revision						
<input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:								
<p>18 How do you know that it is homework that improves grades?</p>									
<p>Resources for Completing Homework</p>									
<p>19 Does the homework you set your year 10 students require internet access?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>									
<p>20 If yes do you know if your year 10 students have internet access at home?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know</p>									

<p>21 Does the homework you set your year 10 students require computer access?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </p>															
<p>22 If yes do you know if your year 10 students have computer access at home?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know </p>															
<p>23 Is there a homework club at the school?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know </p>															
<p>24 If there is a homework club is it part of your work load?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </p>															
<p>25 Does the homework timetable match the availability of subject specific support at the homework club?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know </p>															
<h3>Planning Homework</h3>															
<p>26 Do set your year 10 students differentiated homework?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Rarely <input type="radio"/> Never </p>															
<p>27 If yes how do you differentiate?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> By task <input type="radio"/> By time <input type="radio"/> With resources <input type="radio"/> Other - please state </p>															
<p>28 Do you include homework in your lesson planning?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Rarely <input type="radio"/> Never </p>															
<p>29 Is homework a valuable aid to learning?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No </p>															
<p>30 How long do you expect the homework you set your year 10 students take to complete?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 33%;">Top Set</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 33%;">Middle Set</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 33%;">Lower Set</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Top Set	Middle Set	Lower Set	<input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes
Top Set	Middle Set	Lower Set													
<input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 30 minutes													
<input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 60 minutes													
<input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Up to 90 minutes													
<input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes	<input type="radio"/> Over 90 minutes													
<p>31 How much time do you give your year 10 students to complete homework?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> 1 day <input type="radio"/> 2 days <input type="radio"/> 3 days <input type="radio"/> 4 days </p>															

<input type="radio"/> Up to a week	<input type="radio"/> A week	<input type="radio"/> Longer than a week
32 How soon after homework is completed do you give your year 10 students feedback?		
<input type="radio"/> Within 24 hours	<input type="radio"/> Less than a week	<input type="radio"/> More than a week
Completion of Homework		
33 Do your year 10 students complete their homework?		
Top Set <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Usually <input type="radio"/> Never	Middle Set <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Usually <input type="radio"/> Never	Lower Set <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Usually <input type="radio"/> Never
34 Does homework cause a stress to your year 10 students?		
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		
35 If yes to which pupils?		
<input type="radio"/> Boys <input type="radio"/> Girls <input type="radio"/> EAL <input type="radio"/> Pupil Premium <input type="radio"/> New arrivals <input type="radio"/> High Mobility <input type="radio"/> New arrivals <input type="radio"/> SEN <input type="radio"/> Gifted and Talented <input type="radio"/> Others - Please state who		
36 Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?		
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		
37 If yes - Do you make allowances for this?		
<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		
38 If so what allowances? Please specify		
39 Which of your year 10 students would have difficulty completing homework at home?		
<input type="radio"/> Boys <input type="radio"/> Girls <input type="radio"/> EAL <input type="radio"/> Pupil Premium <input type="radio"/> New arrivals <input type="radio"/> High Mobility <input type="radio"/> New arrivals <input type="radio"/> SEN <input type="radio"/> Gifted and Talented <input type="radio"/> Others - Please state who		
Punishments for non-completion of Homework		
40 Are there any punishments in place if your year 10 students do not complete homework? Tick as many		

boxes as applicable

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school | <input type="checkbox"/> Detention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed in their own time | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state: | |

41 In your experience do punishments work?

- ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

42 Which punishments (if any) have the most effective? Please specify

Homework Policy

43 Does anyone monitor you setting homework? If so who?

- ☐ Head of Department ☐ Senior Teacher ☐ Other - please state:

44 Do your year 10 students record homework in a planner?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

45 If yes who checks the planner?

- ☐ Subject Teacher ☐ Form Tutor ☐ Parents
☐ Someone else - Please state who

46 Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

47 Is there a Homework Policy?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

48 Is there a Home-School Agreement?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

49 Were you involved in developing the Home School Agreement?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix 26: Main Study Governors Questionnaire

INFORMATION SHEET FOR GOVERNORS

“Should Schools Set Homework?”

Mrs Wendy Edwards is a student studying for her Doctorate in Education at the University of Bedfordshire. She is currently carrying out a study looking at should schools set homework and if they do set homework what sort of homework should be set.

Thank you for completing this short questionnaire which should only take around 10 minutes to complete. Questionnaires are also being given to students, parents and teachers. **All questionnaires are anonymous.** Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to the names of all participants and their schools. This means that no names will be used in the evaluation report or any other publication connected with this project. Please note that you may withdraw your consent at any stage before and during the investigation. All data that is collected will be confidential and anonymised to protect the names of the schools and individuals. It will be made available only to Mrs Edwards’ supervisors, will be kept in a password protected electronic file and will be destroyed at the end of the research project.

Any report or publication will be shared with the participating schools. The anticipated date for completion of the project is 2015

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions.

Investigator	Supervisor	Supervisor
Wendy Edwards	Prof. Janice Wearmouth	Prof. Uvanney Maylor
Dept. of Secondary Education	Dept of Education Studies	Dept of Education Studies
University of Bedfordshire	University of Bedfordshire	University of Bedfordshire
Polhill Avenue	Polhill Avenue	Polhill Avenue
Bedford	Bedford	Bedford
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wendy.edwards@beds.ac.uk	janice.wearmouth@beds.ac.uk	uvanney.maylor@beds.ac.uk

* Required

1 I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study *			
<input type="radio"/> Yes		<input type="radio"/> No	
2 I have had my questions answered satisfactorily *			
<input type="radio"/> Yes		<input type="radio"/> No	
3 I have read and understood the information above *			
<input type="radio"/> Yes		<input type="radio"/> No	
4 I consent to completing the questionnaire. *			
<input type="radio"/> Yes		<input type="radio"/> No	
5 Are you male or female? *			
<input type="radio"/> Male		<input type="radio"/> Female	
6 What is your ethnic origin? *			
<input type="radio"/> White British	<input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Indian	<input type="radio"/> Chinese	
<input type="radio"/> White Irish	<input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Pakistani	<input type="radio"/> Other Asian	
<input type="radio"/> Other White Background	<input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	<input type="radio"/> Background	
<input type="radio"/> Black or Black British Caribbean	<input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black	<input type="radio"/> Other Mixed Background	
<input type="radio"/> Black or Black British African Caribbean	<input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black African	<input type="radio"/> Other Ethnic Background	
<input type="radio"/> Other Black Background	<input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Asian	<input type="radio"/> Information refused	
7 What category of Governor are you? *			
<input type="radio"/> Staff	<input type="radio"/> Parent	<input type="radio"/> Local Authority	<input type="radio"/> Co-opted
<input type="radio"/> Foundation	<input type="radio"/> Partnership	<input type="radio"/> Sponsor	<input type="radio"/> Associate
<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:			
Your View on the Value of Homework			
8 In your view should homework be set?			
<input type="radio"/> Yes		<input type="radio"/> No	
9 Is homework a valuable aid to learning?			
<input type="radio"/> Yes		<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Don't Know
10 Why does the school set homework set?			
<input type="radio"/> Reinforces what they have done in class		<input type="radio"/> Helps them learn more	

<input type="radio"/> To finish class work <input type="radio"/> Preparation for class work <input type="radio"/> Helps the teacher to cover all the work <input type="radio"/> Other - please state:	<input type="radio"/> Helps them to work independently <input type="radio"/> Punishment <input type="radio"/> Don't Know									
11 Do you think completing homework helps year 10 students improve their grades? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't Know										
12 If yes - What type of homework do you think is most effective in improving the academic performance of year 10 students? Tick as many boxes as applicable <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Coursework</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Projects</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Revision</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Don't Know</td> <td colspan="2"><input type="radio"/> Other - please state:</td> </tr> </table>		<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work	<input type="radio"/> Coursework	<input type="radio"/> Projects	<input type="radio"/> Revision	<input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork	<input type="radio"/> Don't Know	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:		
<input type="radio"/> Finishing off class work	<input type="radio"/> Coursework	<input type="radio"/> Projects	<input type="radio"/> Revision							
<input type="radio"/> Preparation for classwork	<input type="radio"/> Don't Know	<input type="radio"/> Other - please state:								
13 How do you know that it is homework that improves grades?										
Punishments for non-completion of Homework										
14 Are there any punishments in place in the school if the students do not complete homework? Tick as many boxes as applicable <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Detention</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Completed in their own time</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state:</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</td> </tr> </table>		<input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school	<input type="checkbox"/> Detention	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in their own time	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed	<input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state:	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> Given another chance	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in school	<input type="checkbox"/> Detention								
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed in their own time	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed	<input type="checkbox"/> Reported to another teacher								
<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing happens	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state:	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know								
15 In your experience do punishments work? <input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Rarely <input type="radio"/> Never <input type="radio"/> Don't Know										
Resources for Completing Homework										
16 Is there a Homework Club in the school? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know										

17 If yes who runs the homework club?

18 Should teachers take account of home circumstances when setting homework?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

19 If yes how should they take account of home circumstances when setting homework?

Homework Policy

20 Who monitors homework?

☐ Head of Department ☐ Senior Teacher ☐ Other - please state:
☐ Don't Know

21 Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

22 Is there a homework policy?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

23 Are you on the committee that reviews the homework policy?

☐ Yes ☐ No

24 Is there a Home-School Agreement?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

25 Were you involved in writing the Home School Agreement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix 27: Main Study Senior Teachers Questions

Questions for Senior Teachers

How is homework organised?

Is there a homework policy?

Is there a homework timetable?

Is there a homework Club?

Is there is a homework club who is there to support the pupils?

Why is homework set?

What sanctions are in place if a pupil does not complete homework?

Has your school thought of not setting homework?

What type of homework works best?

Is homework differentiated?

What resources are pupils expected to have access to in order to complete homework?

Does completing homework improve grades?

Does completing homework increase motivation?

Does completing homework develop learning skills?

Is the homework set based on work the pupils have covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson?

Questions for Senior Teachers

Comments show where evidence supports Chapter 5 Findings school documents and interviews - comparison by theme and Hallam's four factors affecting homework

Questions for Senior Teachers – School A

Setting homework

Why is homework set?

What type of homework works best?

The school is looking at creative ways of setting homework to inspire work. ICT is having an impact on what homework is set. Some teachers are not as comfortable is using ICT so the school will support them in developing their skills.

*Type
Future of homework
ICT*

Does completing homework improve grades?

It is a case of sustainability of working towards achievement. It extends what is covered at school and show parents what the pupils are doing in class.

*Educational
Social*

Does completing homework increase motivation?

Increase in grades does motivate

Educational

Does completing homework develop learning skills?

It develops independent learning skills. However pupils are spoon-fed to improve grades

*Economic
Educational*

Is the homework set based on work the pupils have covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson?

It is down to the individual teacher. KS4 pupils are supported in revision skills

Educational

Completing homework

What sanctions are in place if a pupil does not complete homework?

Sanctions are subject and teacher based although they do try not to set too many sanctions and homework may be completed after school.

Sanctions

Is homework differentiated?

Individual teachers will differentiate by task and by outcome and use all most some.

Differentiation

What resources are pupils expected to have access to in order to complete homework?

Pupils are given the opportunity to use ICT facilities at school. All 6th formers are given an ipad and next year this will be rolled out over the rest of the school

ICT

The Management of homework

How is homework organised?

The school uses survey monkey and moodle to support their homework. There is flexibility over the type of homework set. KS3 have a planner. KS4 have electronic access to homework when they log on they are able to show their parents.

ICT

Social

Equity

Home environment

Is there a homework policy?

There is a homework and it is available on the website.

Documentation

Political

Is there a homework timetable?

For KS3 there is a timetable. No books are sent homework so alternatives have to be used eg worksheets. KS4 are more flexible and are sets projects.

Is there a homework Club?

Yes in the library until 4.30 supervised by two members of staff. Those with additional needs have a homework club at lunchtime supervised by teaching staff

Equity

Educational

If there is a homework club who is there to support the pupils?

Departments run homework clubs run by teaching staff. This extends the school day until 5pm

Equity

Educational

Has your school thought of not setting homework?

The school is looking into alternative ways of setting homework.

Future of homework

Questions for Senior Teachers – School B

Setting homework

Why is homework set?

It is to promote independent learning.

*Economic
Purpose*

What type of homework works best?

Short sharp consolidation of the classroom learning with opportunity to practice exam questions. In some subjects research works well.

*Educational
Type*

Does completing homework improve grades?

Yes because they are doing additional work as long as the work is beneficial and relevant especially at KS4. Those students that do homework in KS4 work harder and do get better grades.

Educational

Does completing homework increase motivation?

No, students who do homework well are already motivated to do it. Students lose motivation if homework is set but not collected or marked.

Does completing homework develop learning skills?

Yes

*Educational
Economic*

Does it improve individual learning skills or are pupils spoon fed work to make sure grades are maintained?

Can do but probably does not really benefit learning skills as the right sort of homework is not set.

Educational

Is the homework set based on work the pupils have covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson?

Mainly yes

Educational

Completing Homework

What sanctions are in place if a pupil does not complete homework?

Break, lunch and after school detentions plus phone calls and letters home. Day time detentions subject teachers and depts. after school detentions HODs and SLT.

Sanctions

Is homework differentiated?

Again not consistent in some subjects yes. Opportunity for

this is via research projects so they can answer a question or research an issue in any medium they like e.g. song, video, story etc. *Differentiation*

What resources are pupils expected to have access to in order to complete homework?

Computer, either at home or at school.

Home Environment

The Management of Homework

How is homework organised?

All students have a hardcopy planner and are expected to enter homework in it. It is not available online

Social

Is there a homework policy?

Every parent in year 7 signs a home school agreement that includes supporting homework. Homework is incorporated in our learning and teaching policy and staff handbook. This is available online

*ICT
Documentation*

Is there a homework timetable?

Homework timetable is organised by SLT but homework content is set by department. Each year group has their own homework timetable.

Is there a homework Club?

There is a homework club for SEN and students can access the library before and after school.

*Equity
Educational*

If there is a homework club who is there to support the pupils?

Yes SEN homework club supported by non-teaching staff

*Equity
Educational*

Has your school thought of not setting homework?

Yes it has and they are in the process of revamping homework and who sets it, when, how much etc.

Future of homework

Questions for Senior Teachers – School C

Setting homework

Why is homework set?

Homework is set to enrich what is learnt in class. It is designed to be as engaging and challenging as classwork. It enables pupils to work independently and to shape their own learning. There is a statement in the independent learning policy.

Purpose
Political
Educational
Economic

What type of homework works best?

Project based homework has been tried over 6 weeks but it didn't work. Pupils left it until the last minute and teachers found it impossible to track and monitor progress. As far as possible the style is open so that pupils can select the approach that works best for them.

Type

Does completing homework improve grades?

It does if parents support learning at home. If supported then pupils have access to quality learning at home. If pupils conduct wider research and consolidate in class learning then it will make a difference.

Educational

Does completing homework increase motivation?

It depends on if pupils see the relevance of the homework that is set.

Does completing homework develop learning skills?

If the right type of homework is set then it can consolidate knowledge and skills. It is a really good opportunity to develop new skills especially independence, resilience and contextual knowledge

Type
Educational
Economic

Is the homework set based on work the pupils have covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson?

A mixture of both

Educational

Completing Homework

What sanctions are in place if a pupil does not complete homework?

Staged approach – one chance, call/email home, subject detention and whole school detention. Staged approach

Sanctions

from class teacher, HOD, Year Leader

Is homework differentiated?

Yes, it follows 3 pathways which are graded. It varies – sometimes by task, sometimes by open style. Directed choice enables differentiation.

Differentiation

What resources are pupils expected to have access to in order to complete homework?

Learning platform has stuck sheets, weblinks, suggested reading links, exemplar materials. Pupils are not always expected to have access to a computer at home but they can access them in the library

Equity

Home environment

The Management of Homework

How is homework organised?

All students in years 7-13 are issued with a planner at the start of the academic year. It is not electronic but one of the year 9 students has written an app which is available from the apple store. It is being trialled with a group of year 8 students and will be rolled out next year. It will automatically send an email summary to parents as well. Some departments set it centrally, others leave it to individual teachers. Some departments set a bank of tasks from which teachers can select activities.

Social

Documentation

Future of homework

Is there a homework policy?

Both the policy and home-school agreement are available online

ICT

Is there a homework timetable?

There is a timetable for each year group 7-11. Year 12 and 13 should expect homework each lesson.

Is there a homework Club?

Pupils can complete homework independently in the library after school until 5.30 each night. There is supported homework club in the Learning Support base (LSAs) and Maths offer a homework club after school on a Thursday.(Maths teachers)

Equity

Economic

Educational

Has your school thought of not setting homework?

No, homework is needed to cover the content and skills within the curriculum.

Future of homework

Educational

Questions for Senior Teachers - School D

Setting homework

Why is homework set?

- to consolidate learning
- extend learning
- reinforce learning
- apply learning to new situations
- develop skills
- develop independence
- support learning

*Educational
Purpose
Economic*

What type of homework works best?

- Short concise
- Engaging
- varies between subjects
- promote flipped learning
- booklets

Type

Does completing homework improve grades?

- For some it does
- It does when students are engaged in the task

Educational

Does completing homework increase motivation?

- For some students it does
- Yes when they see progress and feel confident about their learning

Educational

Does completing homework develop learning skills?

- It can improve the organisational skills of the student if they believe or see the teacher will follow up if it is not completed. They then don't take the risk so complete work set and organise their time to do so. It depends on the task

Economic

Is the homework set based on work the pupils have covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson?

- This can be dependent on year group or key stage. Based on work in class - often finishing off. Much better if it is flipped learning.

Educational

Completing Homework

What sanctions are in place if a pupil does not complete homework?

- Detentions
- Behaviour for learning policy

Sanctions

- Reminder
- Extension of time
- Letter home
- Call home

Is homework differentiated?

- It should be but not across all subjects by task or time

Differentiation

What resources are pupils expected to have access to in order to complete homework?

- Computer and internet access
- worksheets

Home environment

The Management of Homework

How is homework organised?

By the class teacher with reference to the homework timetable. SoW for cohort and by team. The timetables have time recommendations for each year group. Student planner records homework.

Social

Is there a homework policy?

Yes although not widely referenced and is due for review July 2014

Political

Is there a homework timetable?

Yes for each year group and based on as closest match as possible to lesson times and balancing the work load

Is there a homework Club?

There is a homework club for each year group .

1 SEN students have a club

2 Student services run a weekly club in the library

3 Sessions are run for students to complete homework in subjects

Equity

Educational

If there is a homework club who is there to support the pupils?

1 SFL (support for learning) staff - TAs/SEN teacher/SENCO

2 Subject teachers/LT/TL (teaching leaders)

3 Student services advisor/IAG (Information Advice and Guidance)

Equity

Educational

Has your school thought of not setting homework?

It has been discussed in the past

Future of homework

Questions for Senior Teachers - School E

Setting homework

Why is homework set?

Online statement - Homework is important. It consolidates learning and helps to create good study habits *Purpose*

What type of homework works best?

When students are given a choice of how to complete eg through interview, PowerPoint or essay *Type*

Does completing homework improve grades?

The maths dept thinks it does *Educational*

Does completing homework increase motivation?

No

Does completing homework develop learning skills?

Students are spoon-fed too much in order to get grades up rather than develop independent learning skills however this will be change as the school is taking on board "learning to learn" developed by Cramlington Learning Village *Economic
Educational
ICT*

Is the homework set based on work the pupils have covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson?

Varies *Educational*

Completing Homework

What sanctions are in place if a pupil does not complete homework?

A class teacher would give a second chance and then a detention. On average 60% of homework is completed. *Sanctions*

Is homework differentiated?

Only through task *Differentiation*

What resources are pupils expected to have access to in order to complete homework?

It is down to the individual teacher *Home environment*

The Management of Homework

How is homework organised?

Each student receives a planner at the start of the school year into which they are expected to write the homework tasks as they are given to them, including when they are to be handed in by. A homework timetable is created to ensure that subject homework is spread sensibly across the week. Through accessing www.plannerLive.com, students and parents can read the full details of the current homework tasks or any previously set homework tasks.

*Social
Documentation
Equity*

Is there a homework policy?

There is homework guidance available to staff, students and parents. There is a home school agreement

*Political
Educational*

Is there a homework timetable?

Each hall has a timetable for each year group. As a broad guide Year 7 students can expect four hours a week, rising to ten hours a week by Year 11. Homework from PE and Performing Arts could include asking you to attend extra-curricular clubs at lunchtime or after school.

Is there a homework Club?

Yes in the library until 4.30 supervised by two members of staff. Those with additional needs have a homework club at lunchtime supervised by teaching staff

*Equity
Educational*

If there is a homework club who is there to support the pupils?

At lunchtime for those with additional needs.

*Equity
Educational*

Has your school thought of not setting homework?

It is being considered

Future of homework

Questions for Senior Teachers - School F

Setting homework

Why is homework set?

- helping students to understand what they learn in the classroom
- to gain confidence in tackling the next level
- preparing to work independently
- gives students the important opportunity to share with parents what they are learning in school

Purpose
Educational
Social
Economic

What type of homework works best?

This differs between subjects

Type

Does completing homework improve grades?

It does in languages. Revision tasks will help before tests.

Educational

Does completing homework increase motivation?

It increases motivation through rewards and success and having pride in feedback.

Educational

Does completing homework develop learning skills?

Depending on the type of homework it can develop organisational and presentation skills

Economic

Is the homework set based on work the pupils have covered in class or to prepare them for the next lesson?

This is different between subjects.

Educational

Completing Homework

What sanctions are in place if a pupil does not complete homework?

No detentions are set for homework. Teachers give learning opportunities which pupils complete. These are assessed by the subject teacher who gives feedback. This is tracked and if homework is not completed then home will be contacted.

Sanctions

Is homework differentiated?

Varies by subject and teacher.

Differentiation

What resources are pupils expected to have access to in order to complete homework?

Computers either at home, library or ILA. Homework booklets are given by subject teachers. Different subject will require different equipment eg art folders, dictionaries and geometry equipment. Some equipment is given to those pupils on free school meals.

*Social
Home environment
ICT*

The Management of Homework

How is homework organised?

Each year group has a timetable. Homework is organised by subject and different subjects organise it in different way linking it to the SoW.

Differentiation

Is there a homework policy?

This has recently been updated

Political

Is there a homework timetable?

Each year group has a homework timetable.

Is there a homework Club?

Enrichment sessions are organised for the school and homework clubs are included in this. Information about these sessions is given to students and parents and is available on the school website

*Equity
Educational
Social
ICT*

If there is a homework club who is there to support the pupils?

Homework clubs are based on subjects and specific subject support is given. Generic support with work is given through the Individual Learning Area

*Equity
Educational*

Has your school thought of not setting homework?

No

Future of homework

Appendix 28: Main Study Questionnaire Results

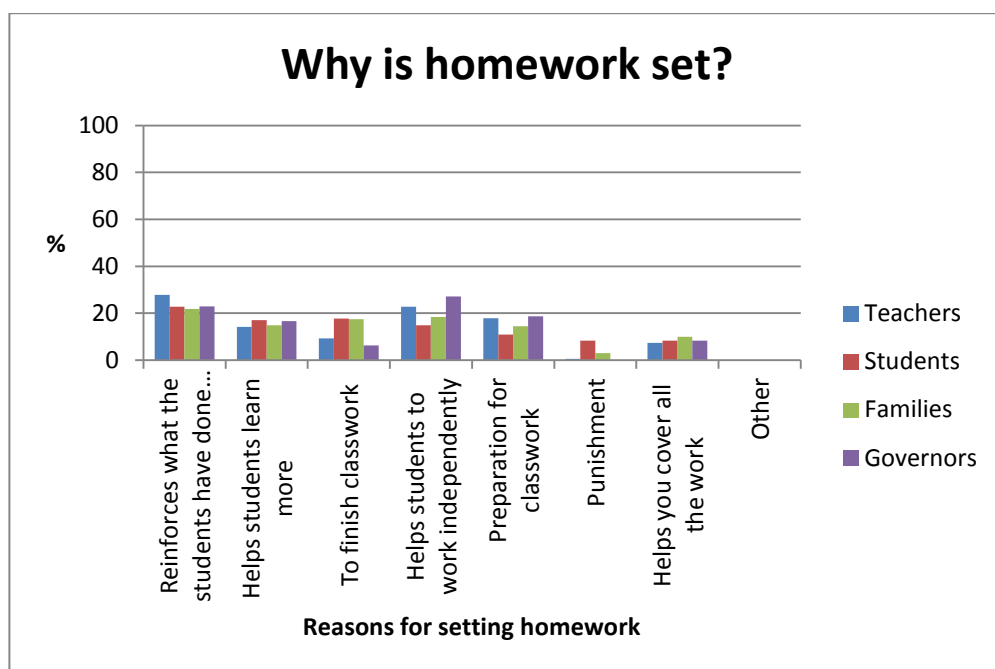


Figure 6.1: Frequency chart - Why is homework set?

Table 6.2: Frequency of responses - Why is homework set?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Reinforces what students have done in class	45	28	63	23	44	22	11	23
Helps students learn more	23	14	47	17	30	15	8	17
To finish classwork	15	9	49	18	35	17	3	6
Helps students to work independently	37	23	41	15	37	18	13	27
Preparation for classwork	29	18	30	11	29	14	9	19
Punishment	1	1	23	8	6	3	0	0
Helps you cover all the work	12	7	23	8	20	10	4	8
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	162	100	276	100	201	100	48	100

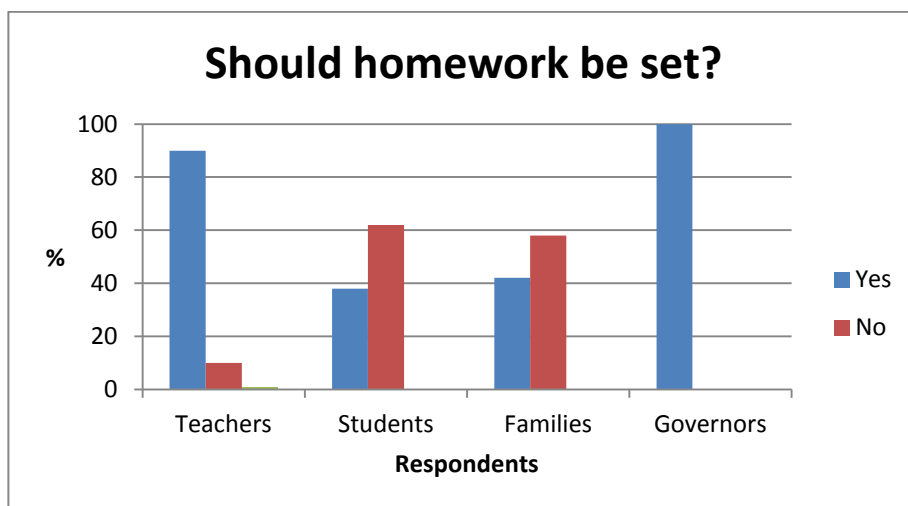


Figure 6.2: Frequency chart - Should homework be set?

Table 6.3: Frequency chart - Should homework be set?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	43	90	56	38	29	42	16	100
No	5	10	82	62	40	58	0	0
	48	100	138	100	69	100	16	100

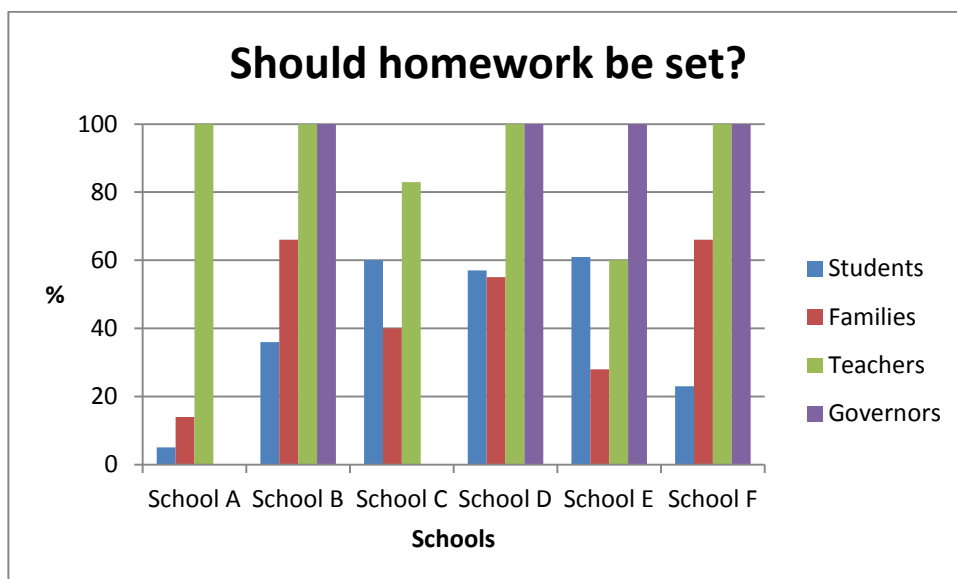


Figure 6.3: Frequency chart - Should homework be set?

Table 6.4: Frequency chart - Should homework be set?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	5	3	14	2	100	n/a	n/a
School B	15	31	8	66	9	100	7	100
School C	3	60	2	40	5	83	n/a	n/a
School D	16	57	10	55	11	100	5	100
School E	14	61	2	28	6	60	3	100
School F	7	23	4	66	10	100	1	100

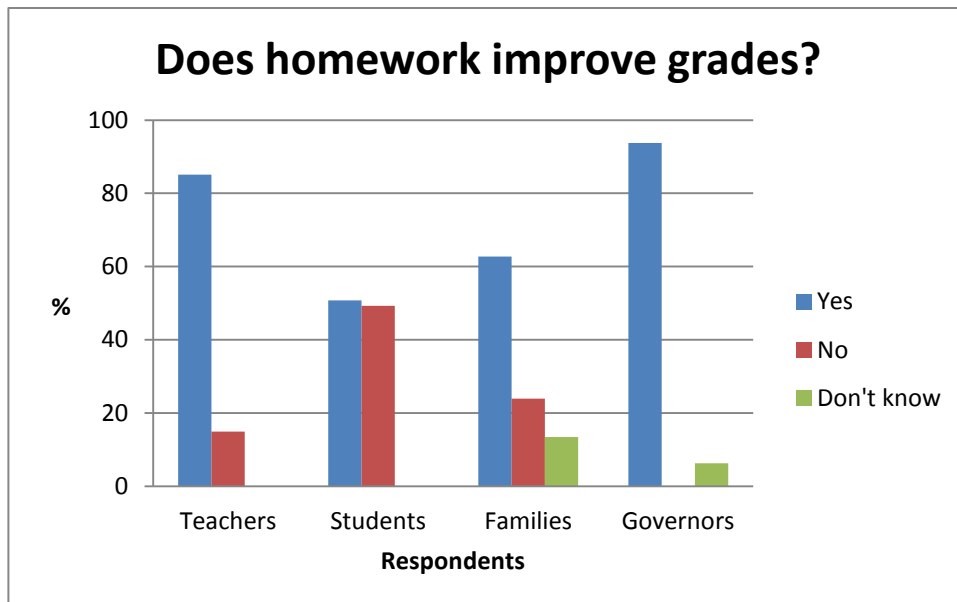


Figure 6.4: Frequency chart - Does homework improve grades?

Table 6.5: Frequency chart - Does homework improve grades?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	42	85	67	51	42	63	15	94
No	7	15	65	49	16	24	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0	0	9	13	1	6
	49	100	132	100	67	100	16	100

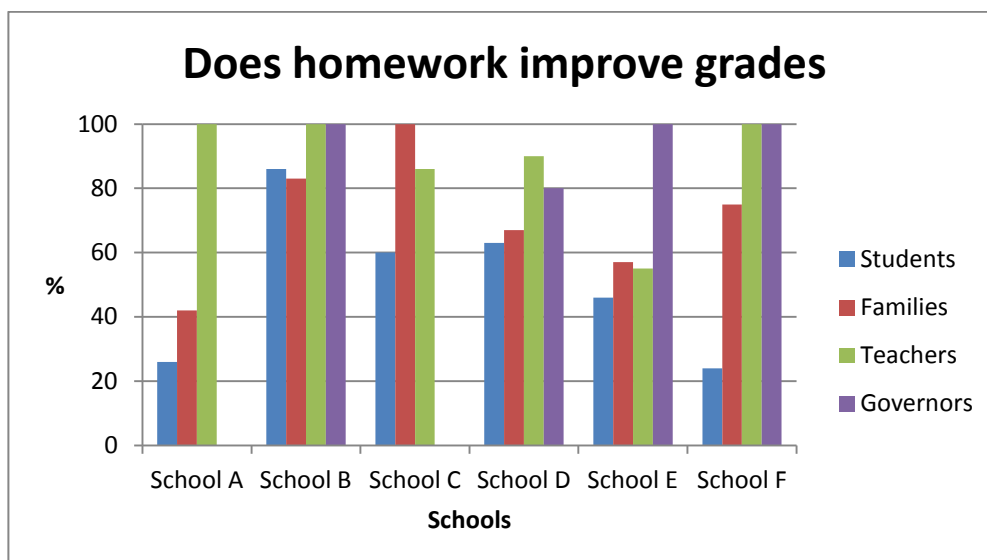


Figure 6.5: Frequency chart - Does homework improve grades?

Table 6.6: Frequency chart - Does homework improve grades?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	5	26	8	42	1	100	n/a	n/a
School B	24	86	10	83	9	100	7	100
School C	3	60	5	100	6	86	n/a	n/a
School D	17	63	12	67	9	90	4	80
School E	11	46	4	57	6	55	3	100
School F	7	24	3	75	11	100	1	100

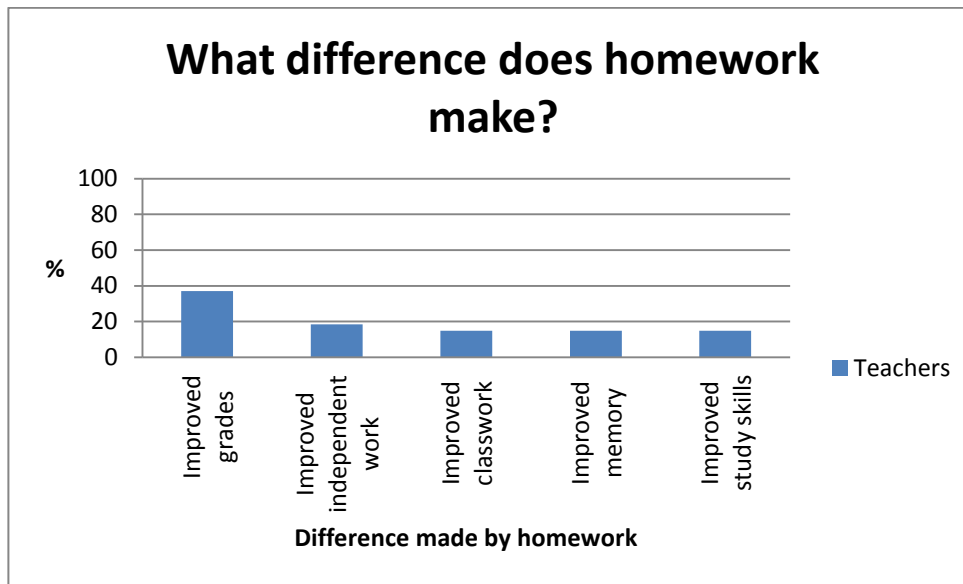


Figure 6.6: Frequency chart - What difference does homework make?

Table 6.7: Frequency chart - What difference does homework make?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Improved grades	10	36
Improved independent work	5	19
Improved classwork	4	15
Improved memory	4	15
Improved study skills	4	15
	27	100

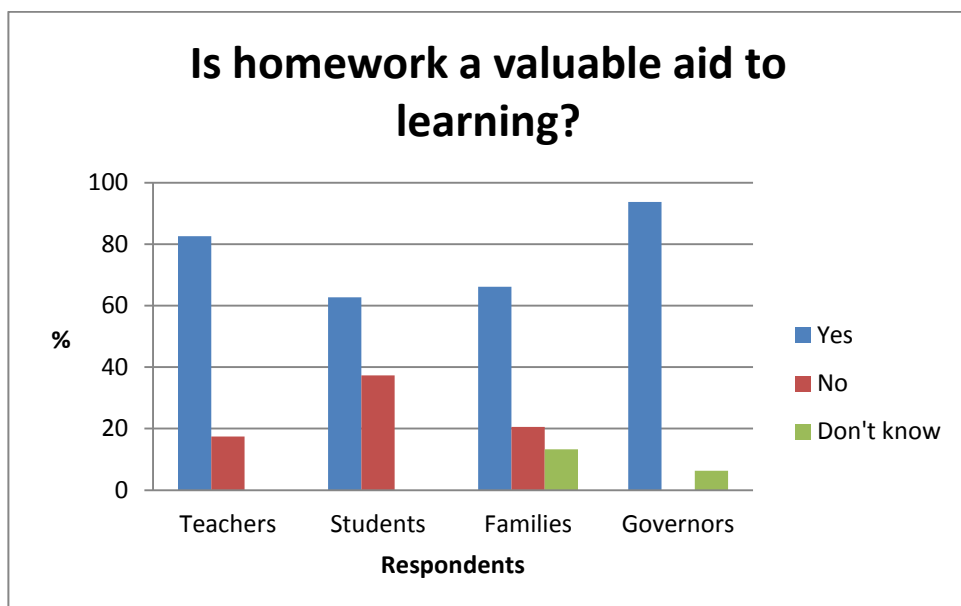


Figure 6.7: Frequency chart - Is homework a valuable aid to learning?

Table 6.8: Frequency chart - Is homework a valuable aid to learning?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	38	83	84	63	46	66	13	94
No	8	17	50	37	14	21	0	0
Don't know	0	0	0	0	9	13	1	6
	46	100	134	100	69	100	14	100

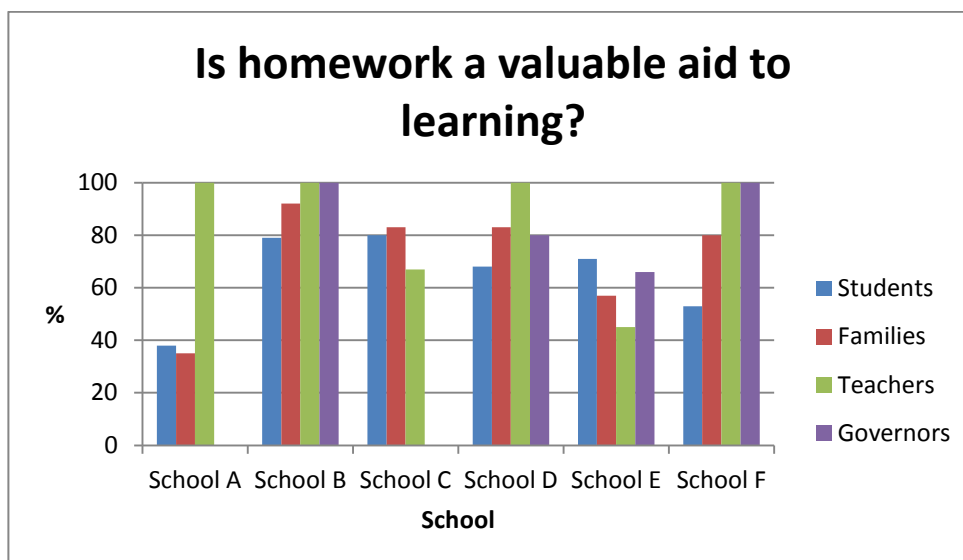


Figure 6.8: Frequency chart - Is homework a valuable aid to learning?

Table 6.9: Frequency chart - Is homework a valuable aid to learning?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	6	38	7	35	1	100	n/a	n/a
School B	22	79	11	92	8	100	7	100
School C	4	80	5	83	4	67	n/a	n/a
School D	19	68	15	83	9	100	5	80
School E	17	71	4	57	5	45	2	66
School F	16	53	4	80	11	100	1	100

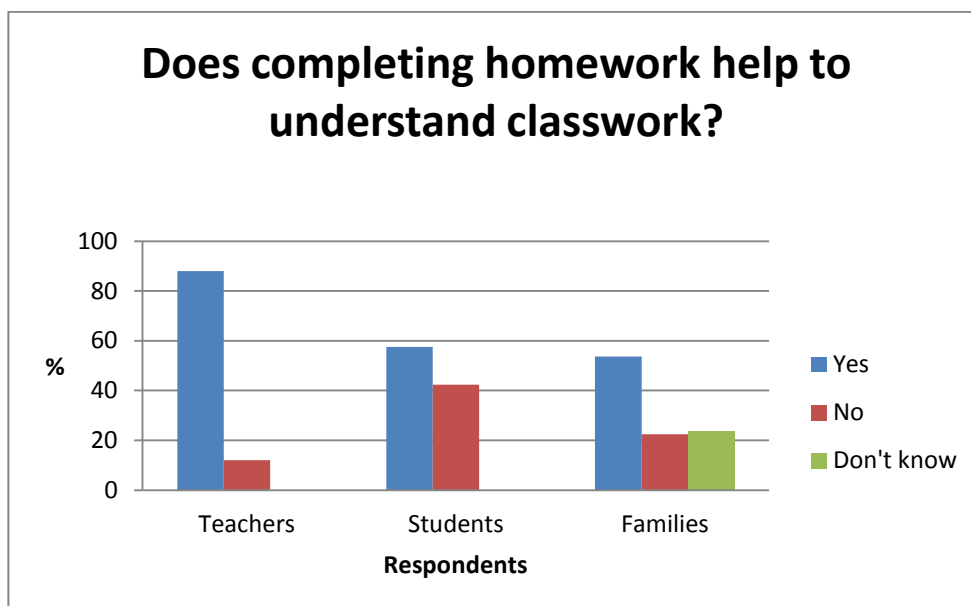


Figure 6.9: Frequency chart - Does completing homework help to understand classwork?

Table 6.10: Frequency chart - Does completing homework help to understand classwork?

	Teachers		Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	44	88	76	58	36	54
No	6	12	56	42	15	22
Don't know	0	0	0	0	16	24
	50	100	132	100	67	100

Table 6.11: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to whether homework should be set

	Students	Families	Teachers	Governors
Should homework be set?	38%	42%	90%	100%
Does homework improve grades?	51%	63%	85%	94%
Is homework a valuable aid to learning?	63%	66%	83%	94%
Does completing homework help to understand classwork?	58%	54%	88%	n/a

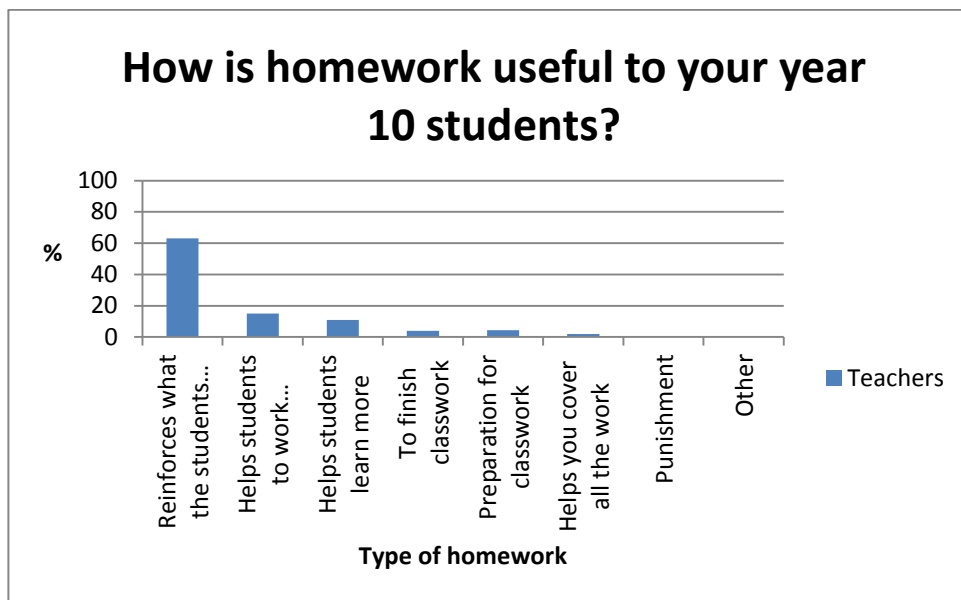


Figure 6.10: Frequency chart - How is homework useful to your year 10 students?

Table 6.12: Frequency chart - How is homework useful to your year 10 students?

Type of homework	n	%
Reinforces what the students have done in class	29	63
Helps students to work independently	7	15
Helps students learn more	5	11
To finish classwork	2	4
Preparation for classwork	2	4
Helps you cover all the work	1	2
Punishment	0	0
Other	0	0
	46	100

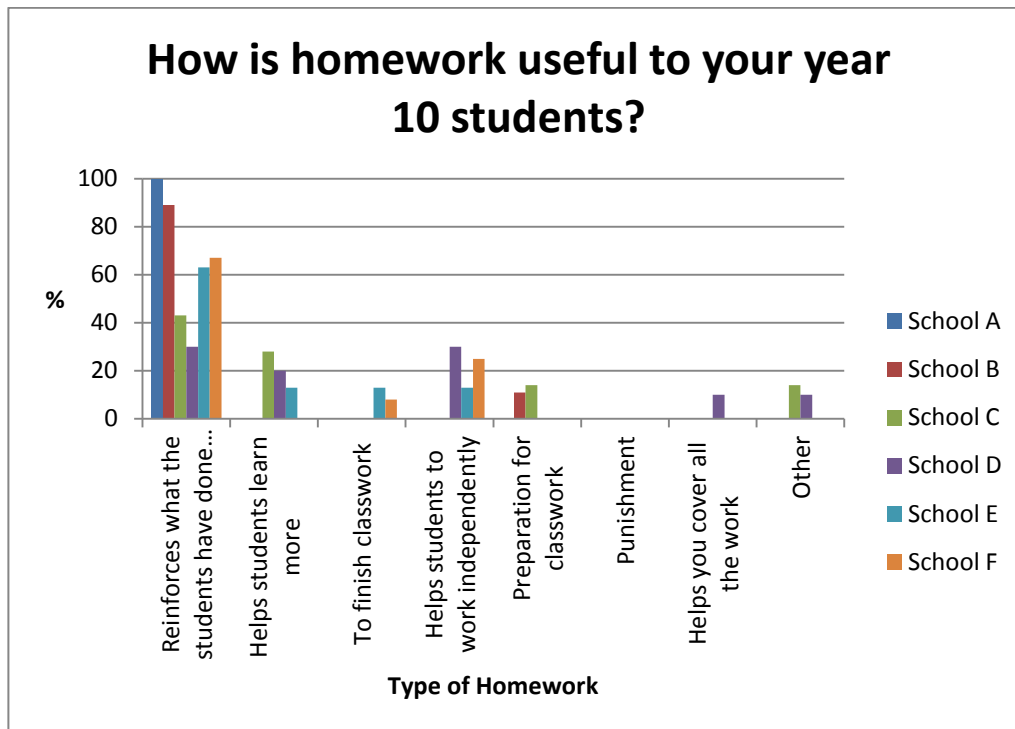


Figure 6.11 Frequency chart - How is homework useful to your year 10 students?

Table 6.13: Frequency chart - How is homework useful to your year 10 students?

	School A		School B		School C		School D		School E		School F	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Reinforces what the students have done in class	2	100	8	89	3	43	3	30	5	63	8	67
Helps students learn more	0	0	0	0	2	28	2	20	1	13	0	0
To finish classwork	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	1	8
Helps students to work independently	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	30	1	13	3	25
Preparation for classwork	0	0	1	11	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Punishment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Helps you cover all the work	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	1	14	1	10	0	0	0	0

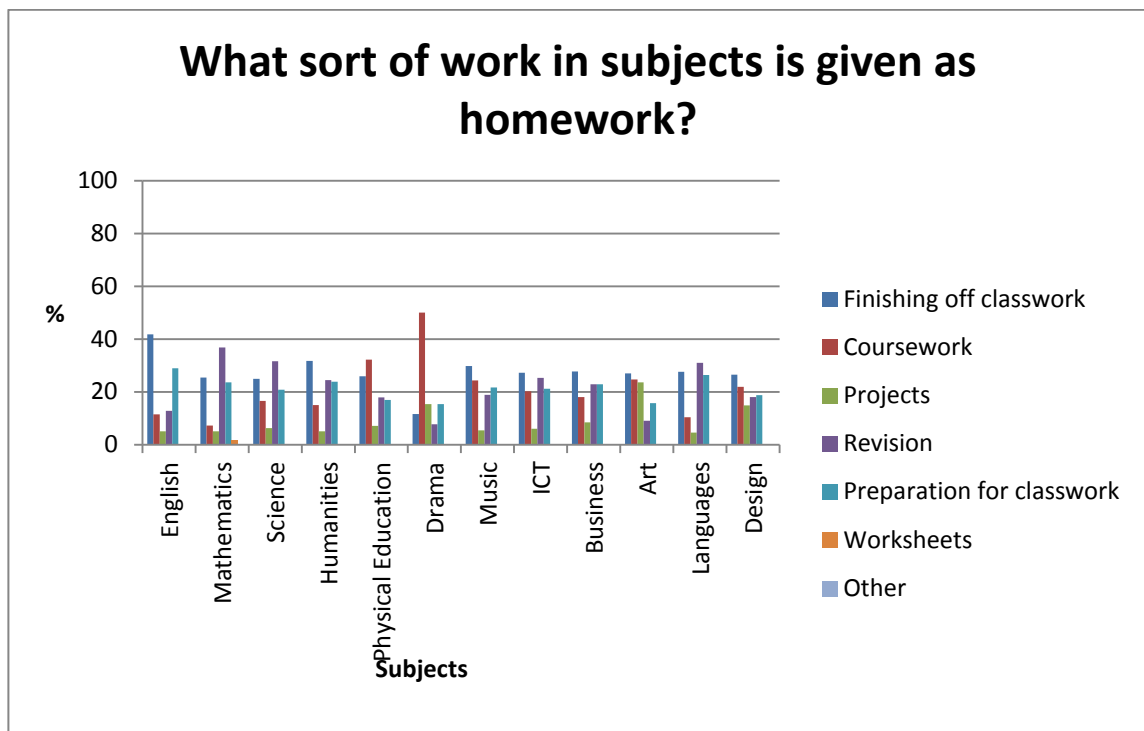


Figure 6.12: Frequency chart - What sort of work in subjects is given as homework?

Table 6.14: Frequency chart - What sort of work in subjects is given as homework?

		Finishing off classwork	Coursework	Projects	Revision	Prep for classwork	Worksheets	Other	Total
English	n	91	25	11	28	63	0	0	218
	%	42	11	5	13	29	0	0	100
Mathematics	n	56	16	11	81	52	4	0	220
	%	25	7	5	37	24	2	0	100
Science	n	60	40	15	76	50	0	0	241
	%	25	17	6	31	21	0	0	100
Humanities	n	57	27	9	44	43	0	0	180
	%	32	15	5	24	24	0	0	100
Physical Education	n	29	36	8	20	19	0	0	112
	%	25	32	7	18	17	0	0	100
Drama	n	6	26	8	4	8	0	0	52
	%	11	50	15	8	15	0	0	100
Music	n	11	9	2	7	8	0	0	37
	%	20	24	5	19	22	0	0	100
ICT	n	27	20	6	25	21	0	0	99
	%	27	20	6	25	21	0	0	100
Business	n	23	15	7	19	19	0	0	83
	%	28	18	8	23	23	0	0	100
Art	n	24	22	21	8	14	0	0	89
	%	27	25	24	9	16	0	0	100
Languages	n	24	9	4	27	23	0	0	87
	%	28	10	5	31	26	0	0	100
Design	n	34	28	19	23	24	0	0	128
	%	27	22	15	18	19	0	0	100

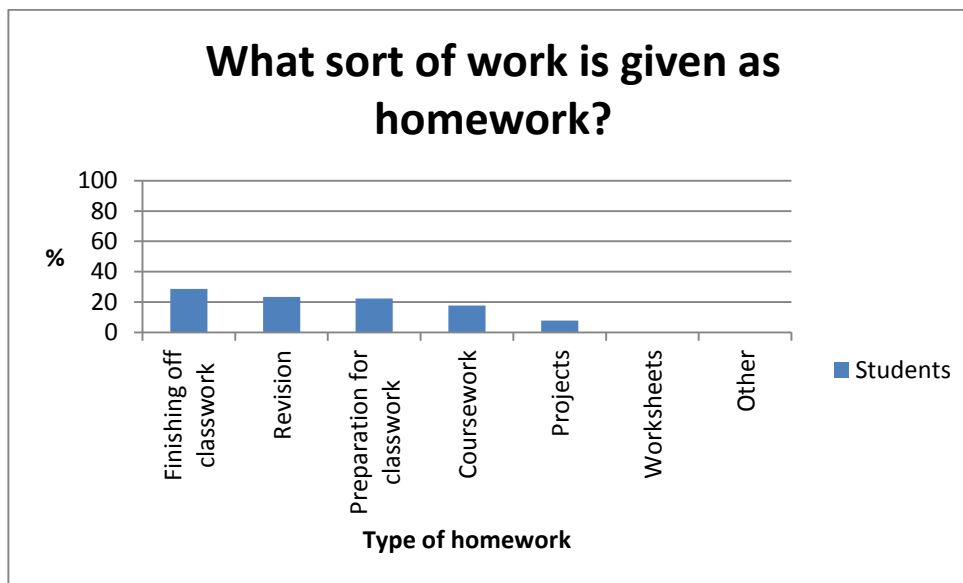


Figure 6.13: Frequency chart - What sort of work is given as homework?

Table 6.15: Frequency chart - What sort of work is given as homework?

	Students	
	n	%
Finishing off classwork	442	28
Revision	362	23
Preparation for classwork	344	22
Coursework	273	18
Projects	121	8
Worksheets	4	1
Other	0	0
	1546	100

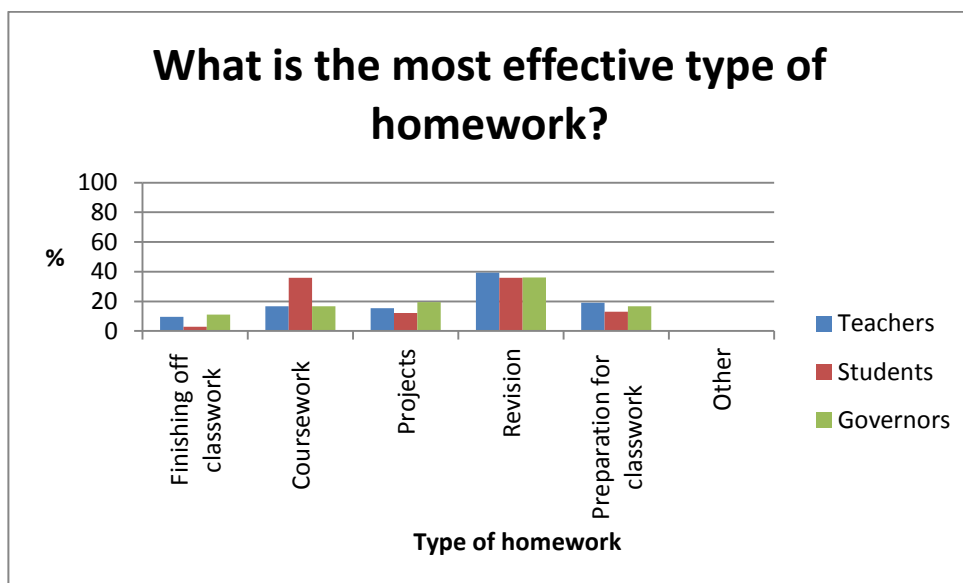


Figure 6.14: Frequency chart - What is the most effective type of homework?

Table 6.16: Frequency chart - What is the most effective type of homework?

	Teachers		Students		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Finishing off classwork	8	10	7	3	4	11
Coursework	14	17	88	36	6	17
Projects	13	15	30	12	7	19
Revision	33	39	88	36	13	36
Preparation for classwork	16	19	32	13	6	17
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
	84	100	245	100	36	100

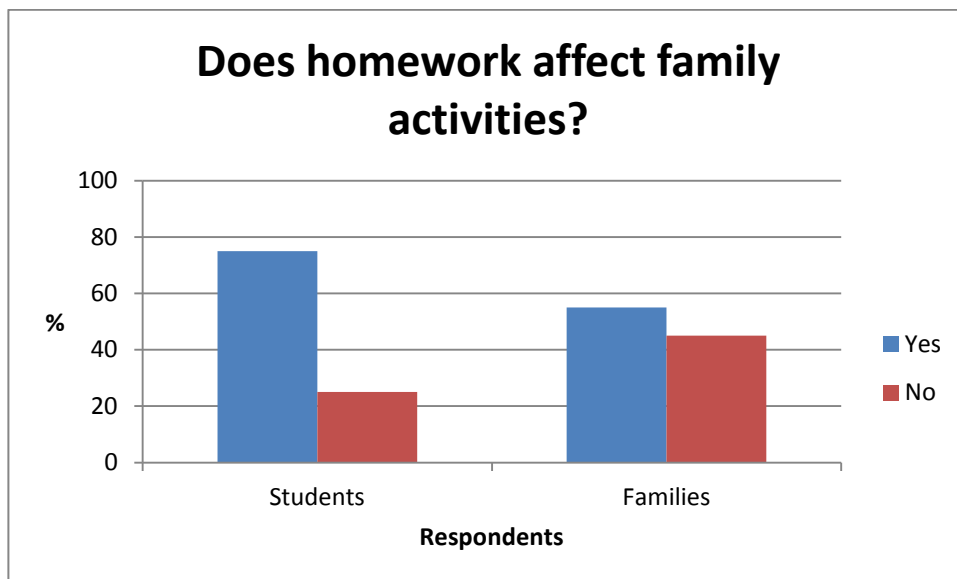


Figure 6.15: Frequency chart - Does homework affect family activities?

Table 6.17: Frequency chart - Does homework affect family activities?

	Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	99	75	37	55
No	33	25	30	45
Don't know	0	0	0	0
	132	100	67	100

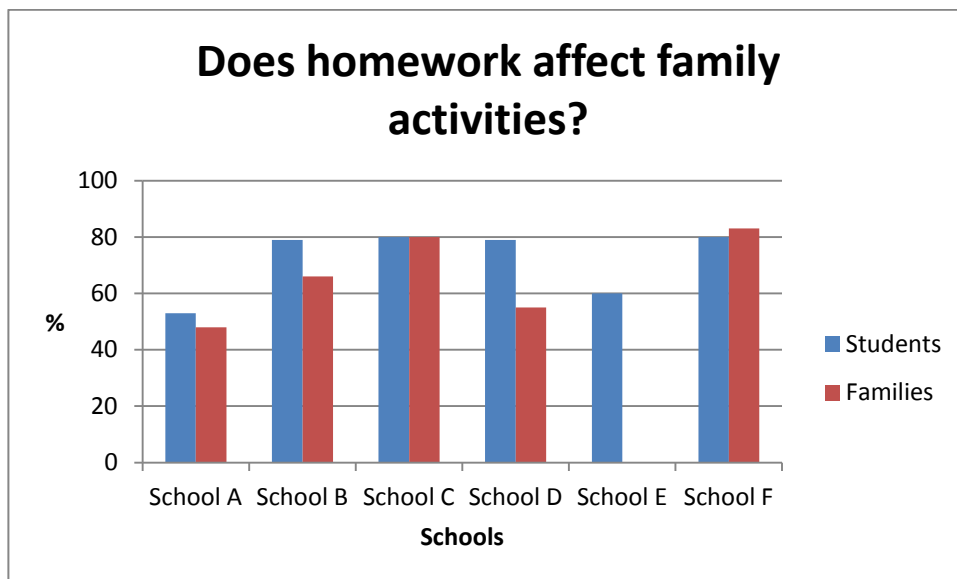


Figure 6.16: Frequency chart - Does homework affect family activities?

Table 6.18 Frequency chart - Does homework affect family activities?

	Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%
School A	10	53	10	48
School B	22	79	8	66
School C	4	80	4	80
School D	23	79	10	55
School E	15	60	0	0
School F	25	80	5	83

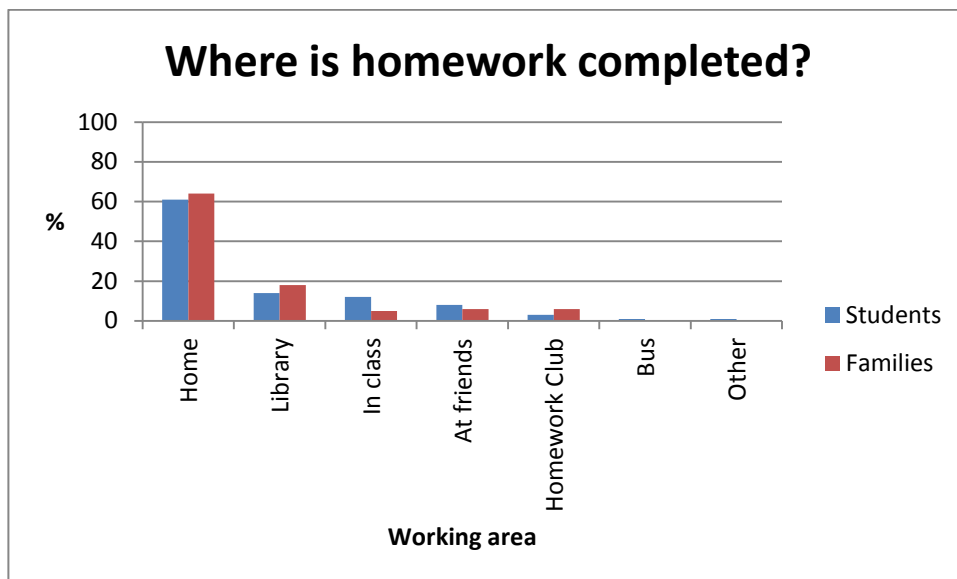


Figure 6.17: Frequency chart - Where is homework completed?

Table 6.19: Frequency chart - Where is homework completed?

	Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%
Home	120	61	61	64
Library	27	14	17	18
In class	23	12	5	5
At friends	15	8	6	6
Homework Club	6	5	6	6
Bus	1	1	0	0
Other	3	0	0	0
	195	100	95	100

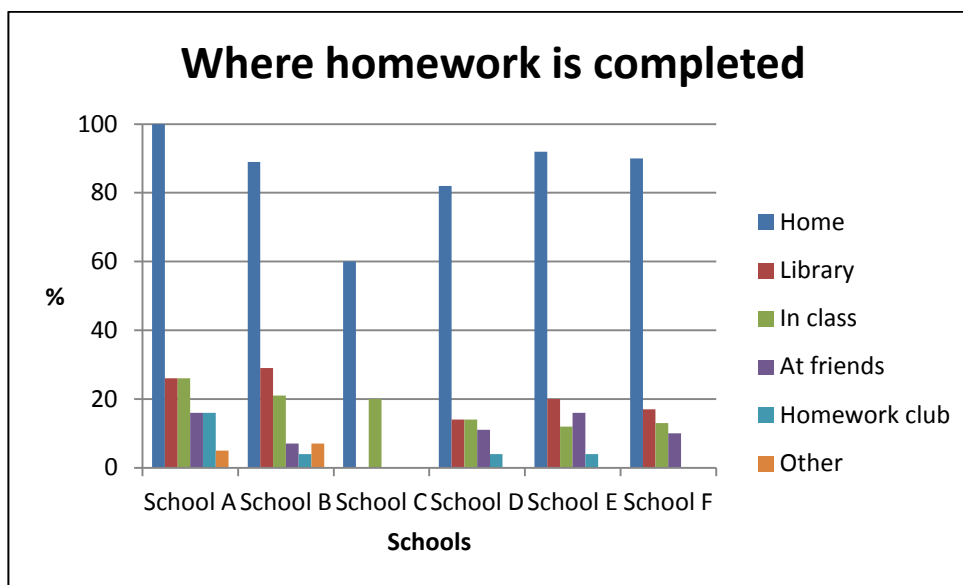


Figure 6.18: Frequency chart - Where is homework completed? Student responses

Table 6.20: Frequency chart - Where is homework completed? Student responses

	Home		Library		In class		At friends		Home work Club		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	19	100	5	26	5	26	3	16	3	16	1	5
School B	25	89	8	29	6	21	2	7	1	4	2	7
School C	3	60	0	0	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
School D	23	82	4	14	4	14	3	11	1	4	0	0
School E	23	92	5	20	3	12	4	16	1	4	0	0
School F	27	90	5	17	4	13	3	10	0	0	0	0

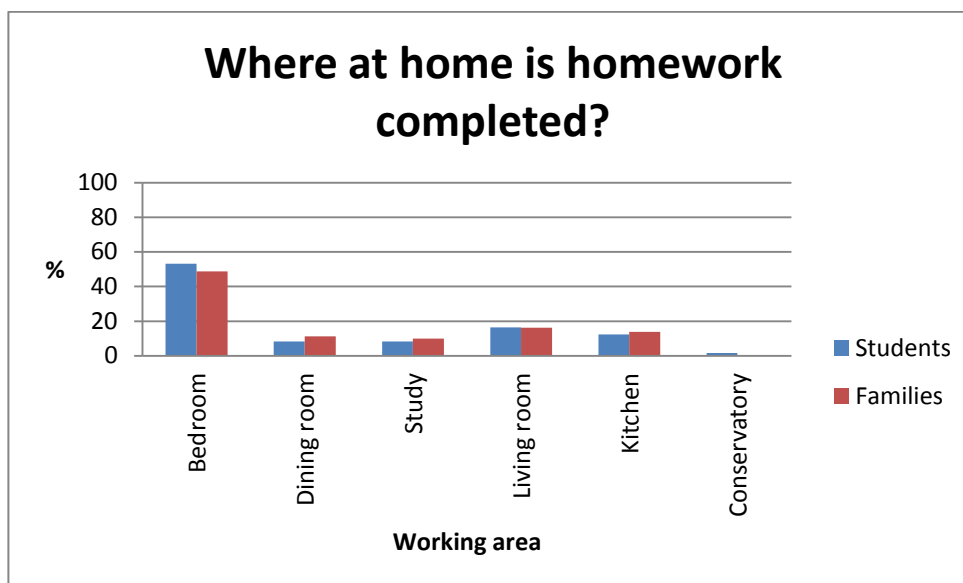


Figure 6.19: Frequency chart - Where at home is homework completed?

Table 6.21: Frequency chart - Where at home is homework completed?

	Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%
Bedroom	65	54	39	49
Dining room	10	8	9	11
Study	10	8	8	10
Living room	20	16	13	16
Kitchen	14	12	11	14
Conservatory	2	2	0	0
	121	100	80	100

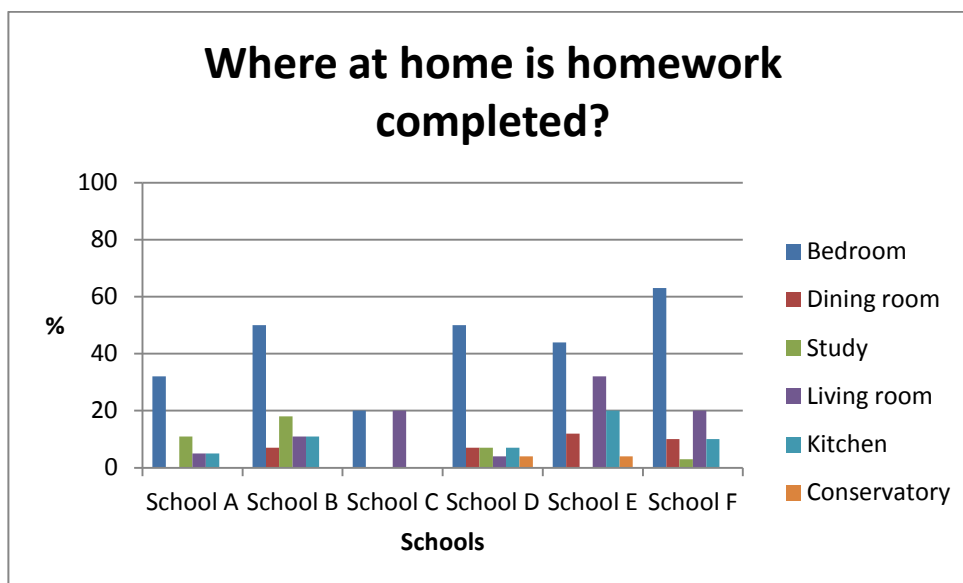


Figure 6.20: Frequency chart - Where at home is homework completed?
Student responses

Table 6.22: Frequency chart - Where at home is homework completed?
Student responses

		School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Bedroom	n	6	14	1	14	11	19
	%	32	50	20	50	44	63
Dining room	n	0	2	0	2	3	3
	%	0	7	0	7	12	10
Study	n	2	5	0	2	0	1
	%	11	18	0	7	0	3
Living room	n	1	3	1	1	8	6
	%	5	11	20	4	32	20
Kitchen	n	1	3	0	2	5	3
	%	5	11	0	7	20	10
Conservatory	n	0	0	0	1	1	0
	%	0	0	0	4	4	0

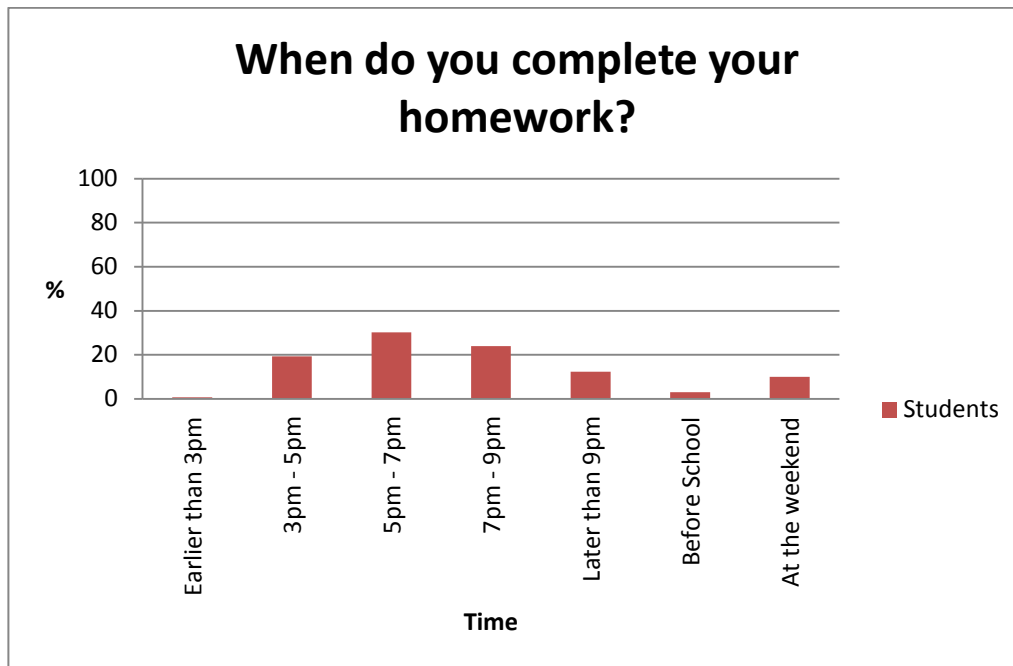


Figure 6.21: Frequency chart - When do you complete your homework?

Table 6.23: Frequency chart - When do you complete your homework?

	Students	
	n	%
Earlier than 3pm	1	1
3pm - 5pm	25	19
5pm - 7pm	39	30
7pm - 9pm	31	24
Later than 9pm	16	12
Before School	4	3
At the weekend	13	10
	129	100

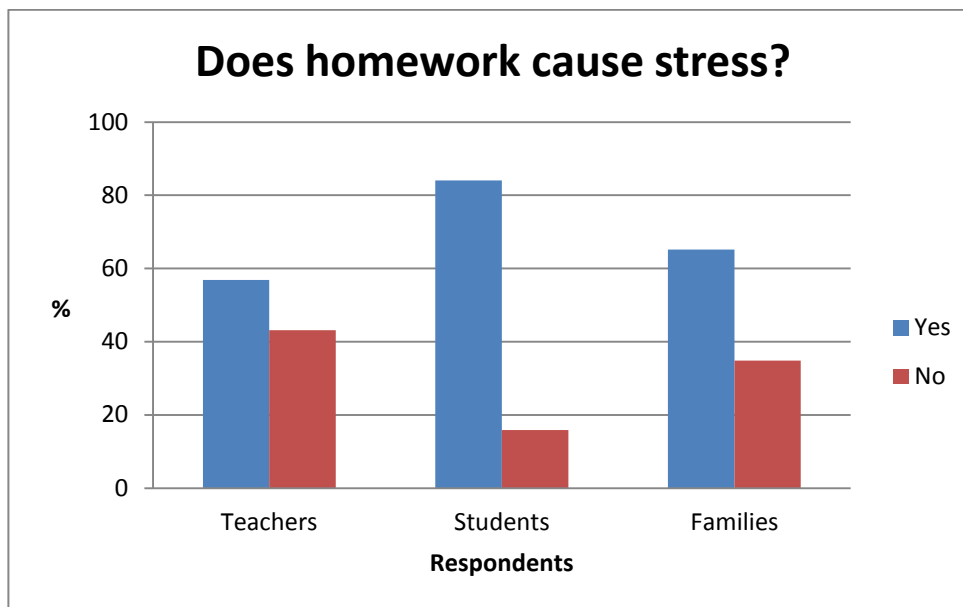


Figure 6.22: Frequency chart - Does homework cause stress?

Table 6.24: Frequency chart - Does homework cause stress?

	Teachers		Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	29	57	111	84	43	65
No	22	43	21	16	23	35
	51	100	132	100	66	100

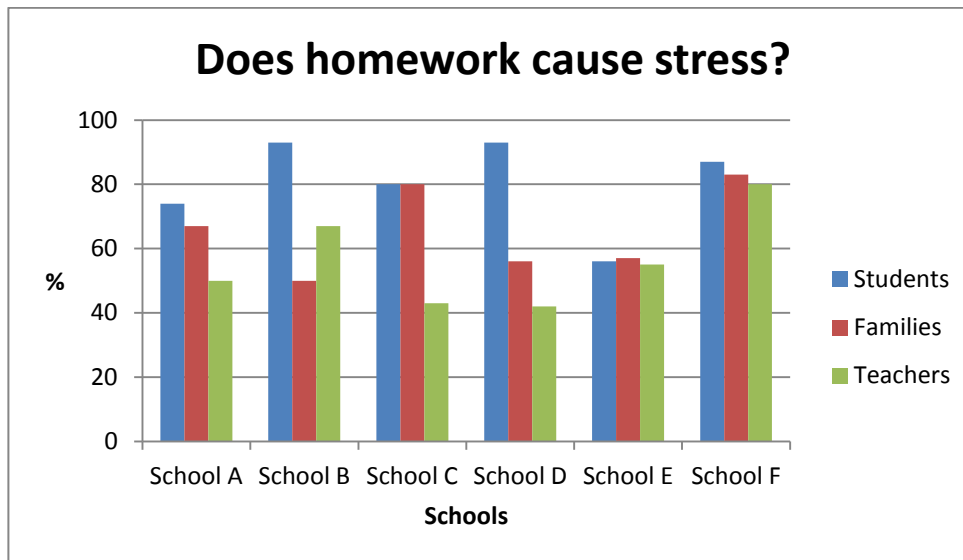


Figure 6.23: Frequency chart - Does homework cause stress?

Table 6.25: Frequency chart - Does homework cause stress?

	Students		Families		Teachers	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	15	74	14	67	1	50
School B	26	93	6	50	6	67
School C	4	80	4	80	3	43
School D	26	93	10	56	5	42
School E	14	56	4	57	6	55
School F	26	87	5	83	8	80

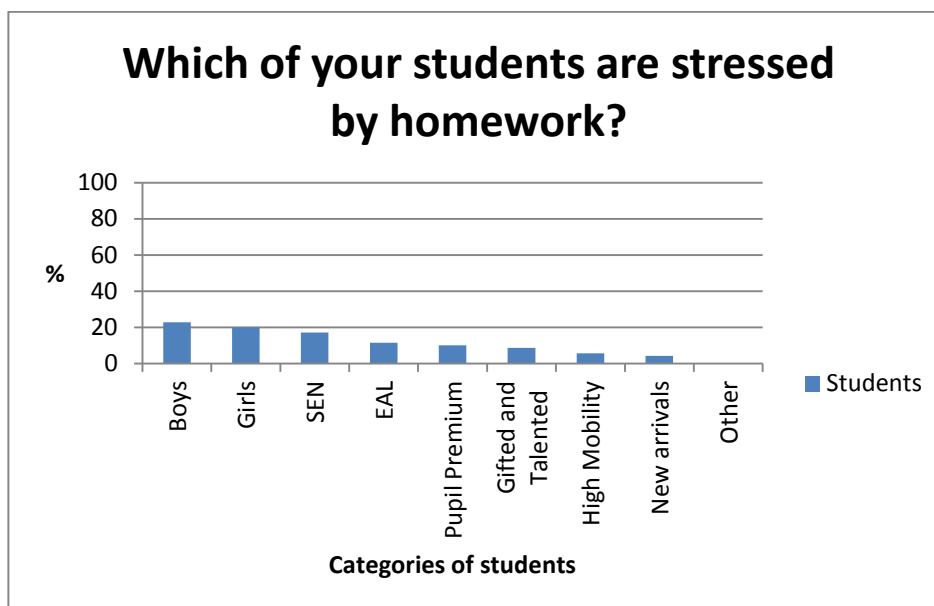


Figure 6.24: Frequency chart - Which of your students are stressed by homework?

Table 6.26: Frequency chart - Which of your students are stressed by homework?

	Students	
	n	%
Boys	16	23
Girls	14	20
SEN	12	17
EAL	8	11
Pupil Premium	7	10
Gifted and Talented	6	9
High Mobility	4	6
New arrivals	3	4
Other	0	0
	70	100

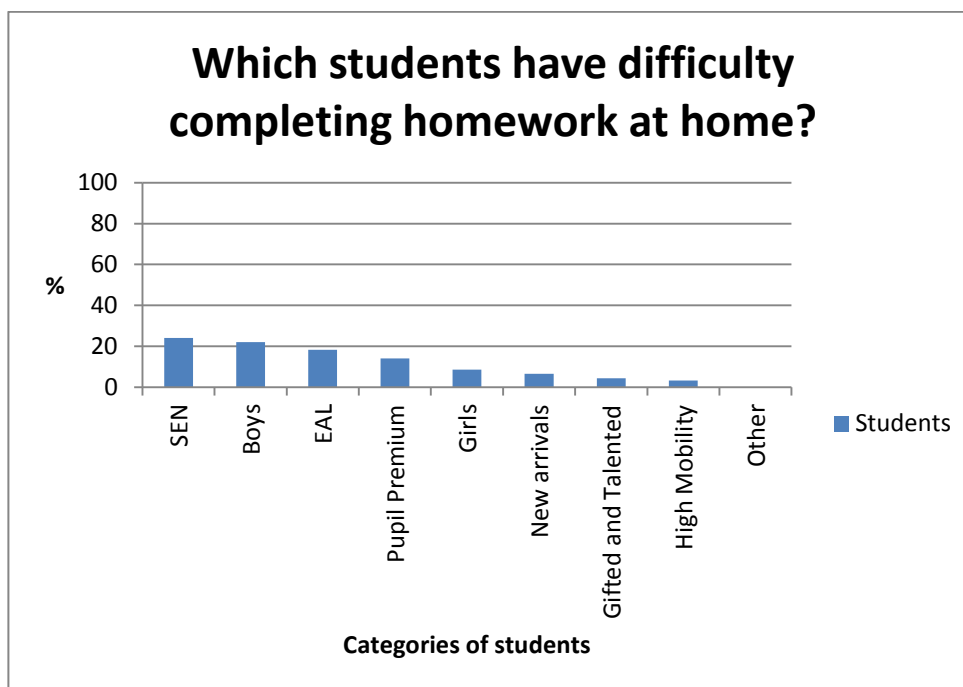


Figure 6.25: Frequency chart - Which students have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.27: Frequency chart - Which students have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Students	
	n	%
SEN	22	24
Boys	20	22
EAL	17	18
Pupil Premium	13	14
Girls	8	9
New arrivals	6	6
Gifted and Talented	4	4
High Mobility	3	3
Other	0	0
	93	100

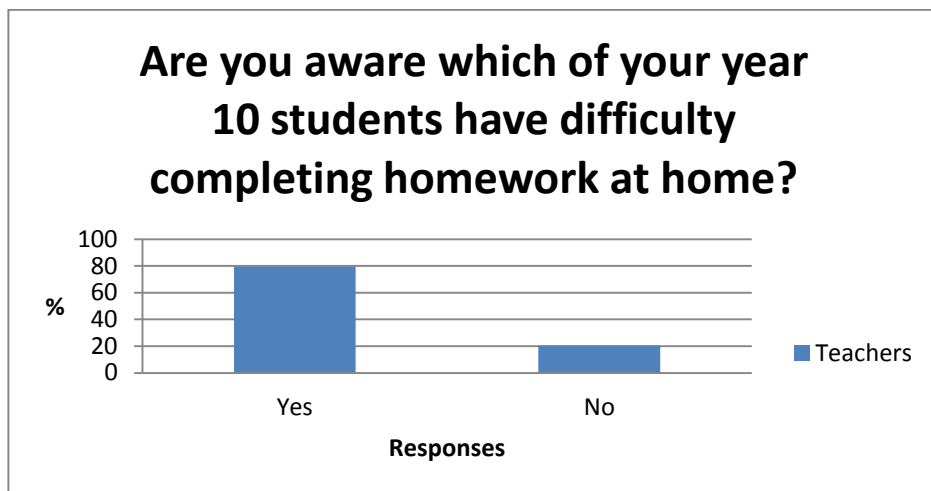


Figure 6.26: Frequency chart - Are you aware which your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.28: Frequency chart - Are you aware which your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Yes	39	80
No	10	20
	49	100

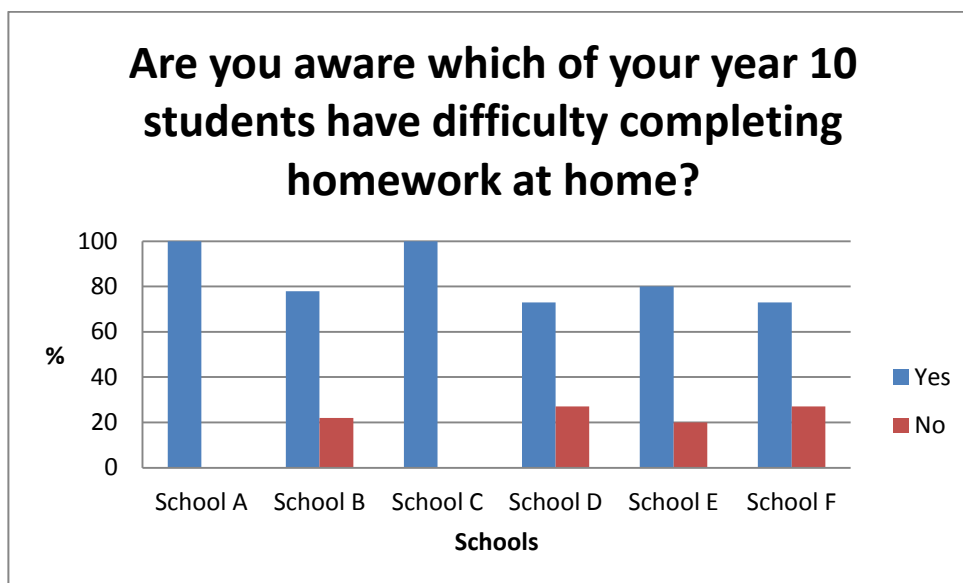


Figure 6.27: Frequency chart - Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.29: Frequency chart - Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Teachers			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0
School B	7	78	2	22
School C	7	100	0	0
School D	8	73	3	27
School E	8	80	2	20
School F	8	73	3	27

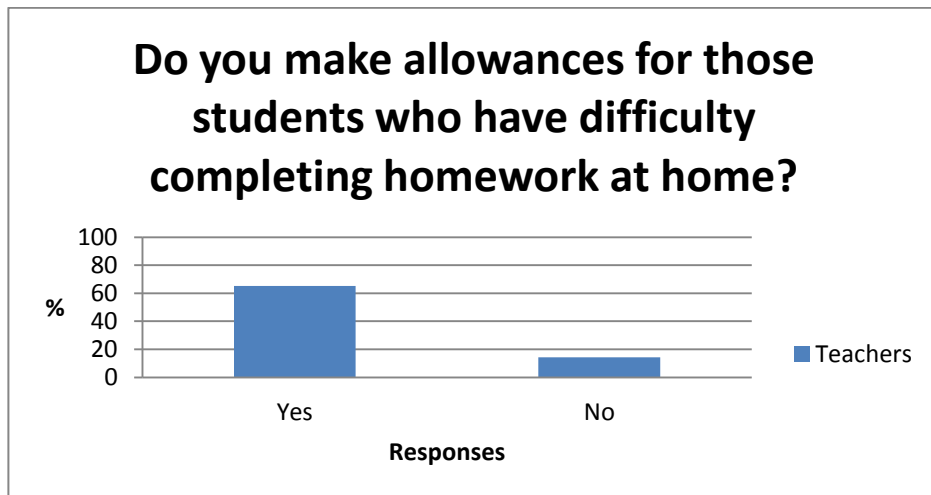


Figure 6.28: Frequency chart - Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.30: Frequency chart - Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Yes	32	65
No	7	14
	49	100

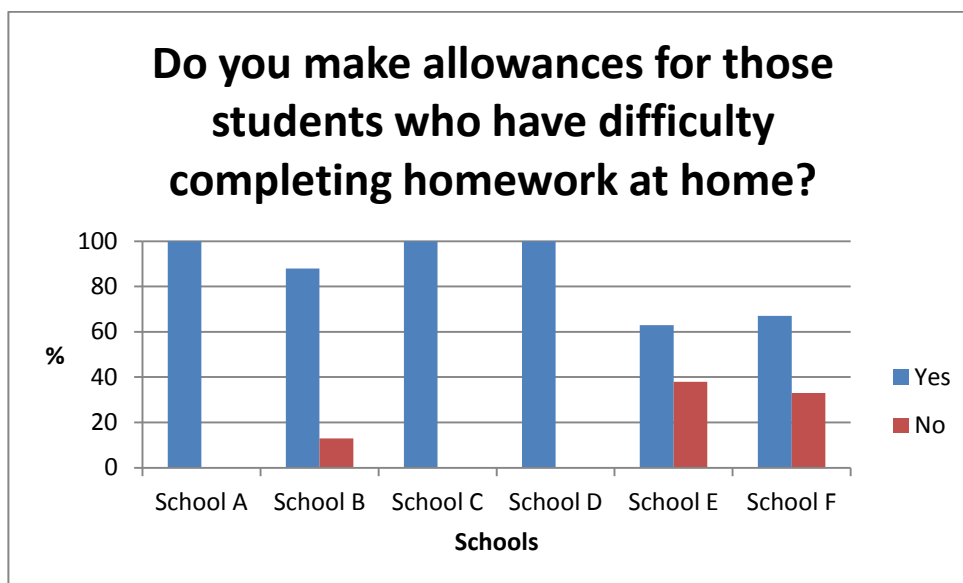


Figure 6.29: Frequency chart - Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.31: Frequency chart - Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0
School B	6	88	1	13
School C	7	100	0	0
School D	7	100	0	0
School E	5	63	3	38
School F	6	67	3	33

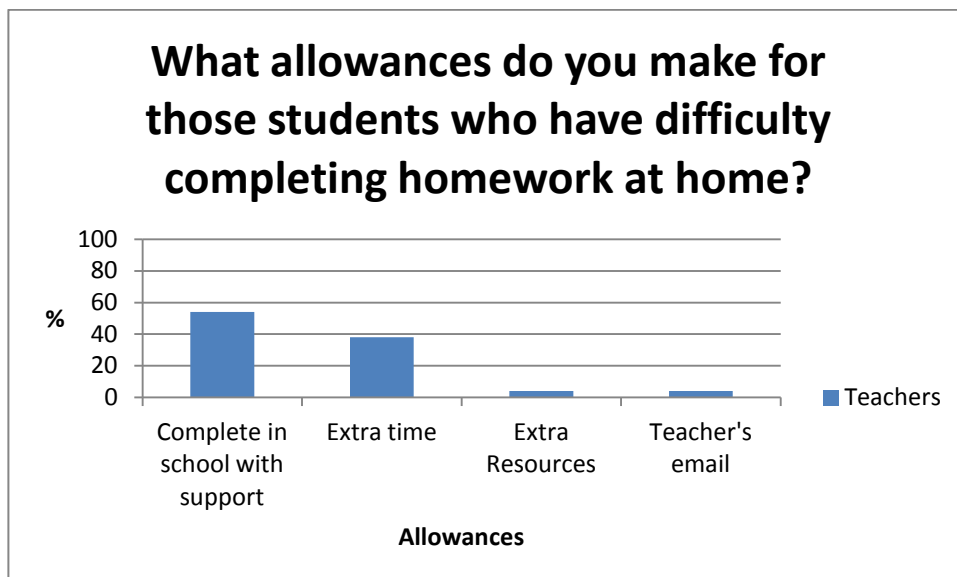


Figure 6.30: Frequency chart - What allowances do you make for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.32: Frequency chart - What allowances do you make for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Complete in school with support	14	54
Extra time	10	38
Extra Resources	1	4
Teacher's email	1	4
	26	100

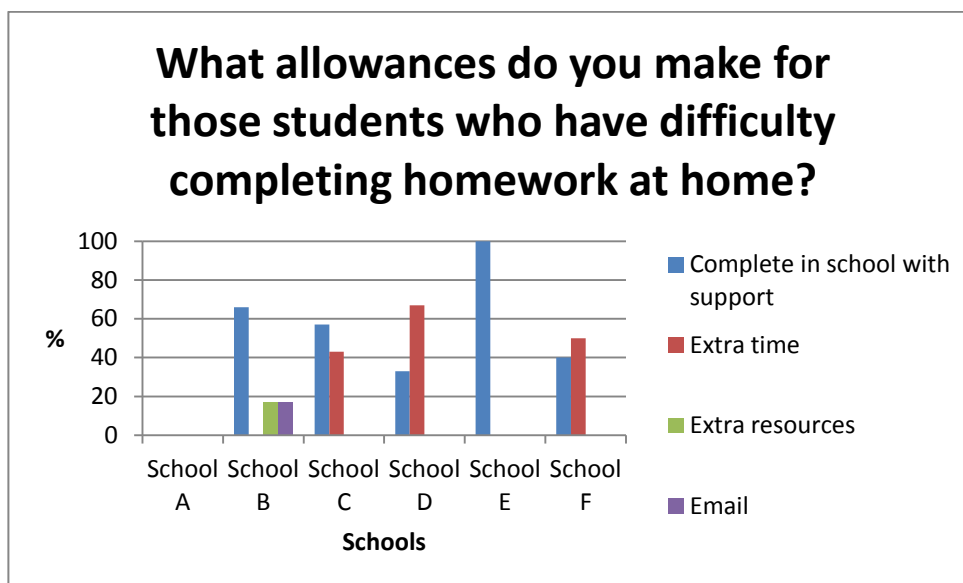


Figure 6.31: Frequency chart - What allowances so you make for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

Table 6.33: Frequency chart - What allowances so you make for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?

	Complete in school with support		Extra time		Extra resources		Email	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	4	66	0	0	1	17	1	17
School C	4	57	3	43	0	0	0	0
School D	2	33	4	67	0	0	0	0
School E	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School F	3	40	3	50	0	0	0	0

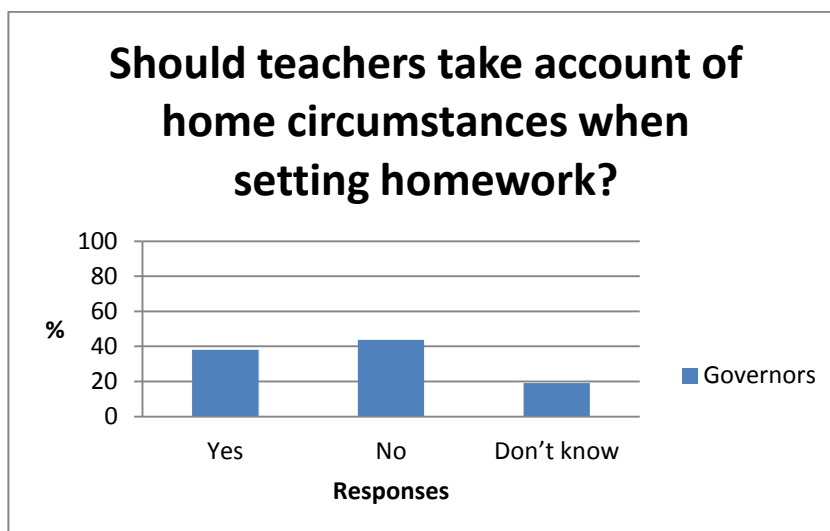


Figure 6.32: Frequency chart - Should teachers take account of home circumstances when setting homework?

Table 6.34: Frequency chart - Should teachers take account of home circumstances when setting homework?

	Governors	
	n	%
Yes	6	38
No	7	44
Don't know	3	19
	16	100

Table 6.35: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to the difficulty students have in completing homework at home

	Teachers
Are you aware which of your year 10 students have difficulty completing homework at home?	80%
Do you make allowances for those students who have difficulty completing homework at home?	65%

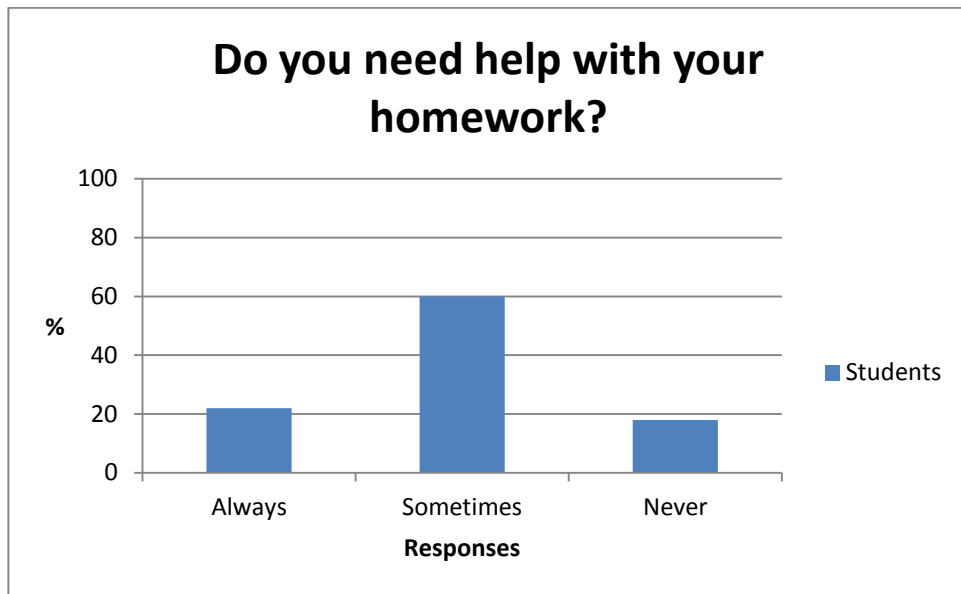


Figure 6.33: Frequency chart - Do you need help with your homework?

Table 6.36: Frequency chart - Do you need help with your homework?

	Students	
	n	%
Always	27	22
Sometimes	76	60
Never	23	18
	126	100

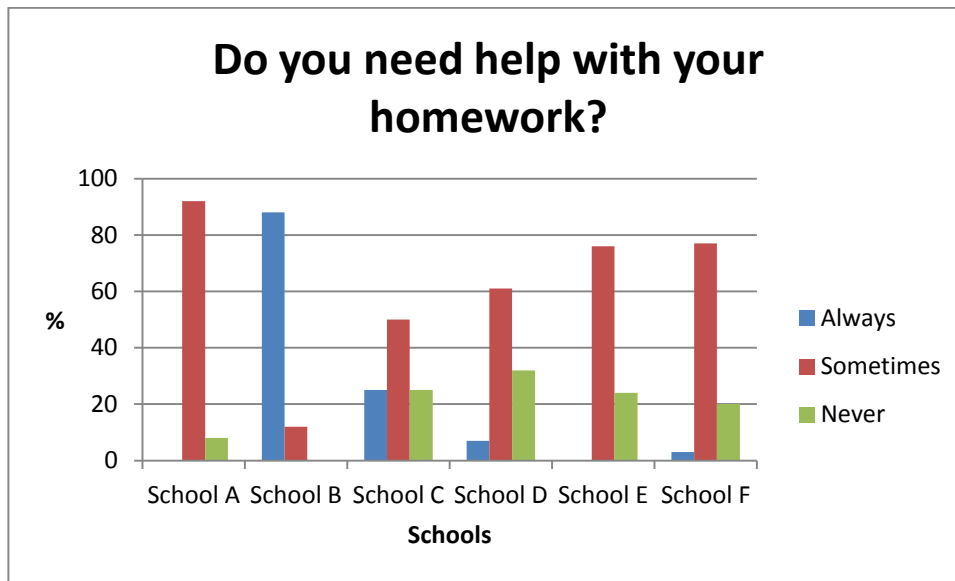


Figure 6.34: Frequency chart - Do you need help with your homework?

Table 6.37: Frequency chart - Do you need help with your homework?

	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	11	92	1	8
School B	23	88	3	12	0	0
School C	1	25	2	50	1	25
School D	2	7	17	61	9	32
School E	0	0	19	76	6	24
School F	1	3	24	77	6	20

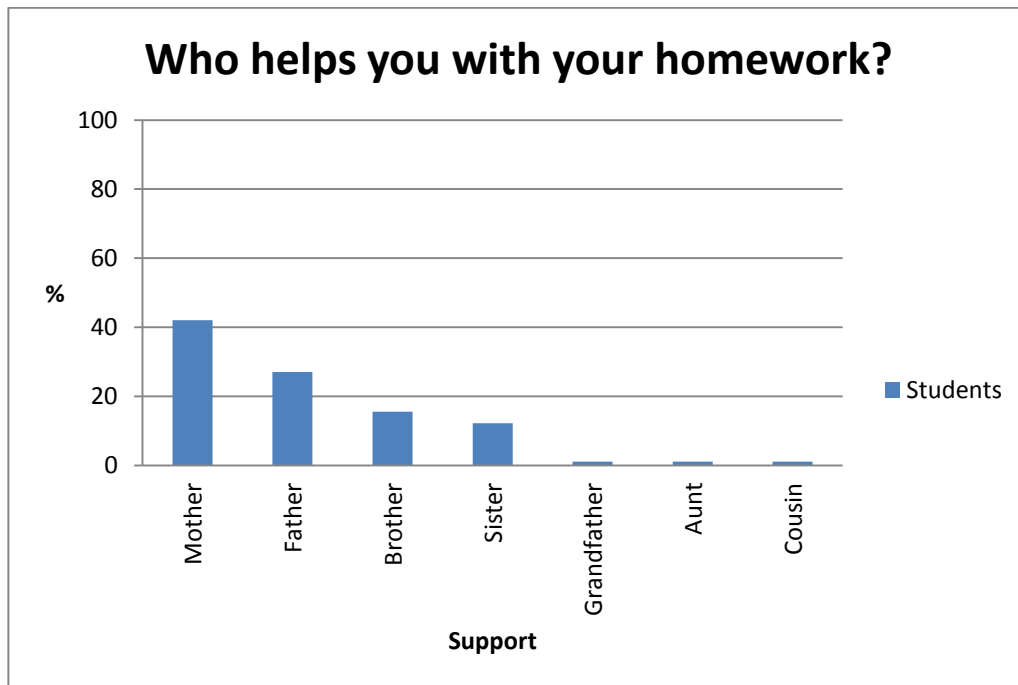


Figure 6.35: Frequency chart - Who helps you with your homework?

Table 6.38: Frequency chart - Who helps you with your homework?

	Students	
	n	%
Mother	38	42
Father	24	27
Brother	14	16
Sister	11	12
Grandfather	1	1
Aunt	1	1
Cousin	1	1
	90	100

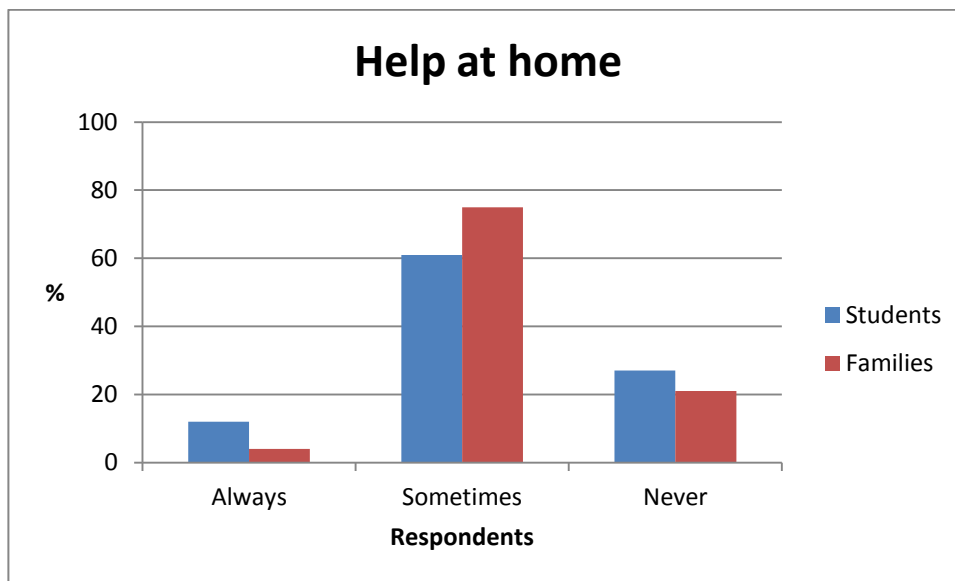


Figure 6.36: Frequency chart - Help with homework at home

Table 6.39: Frequency chart - Help with homework at home

	Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%
Always	27	12	3	4
Sometimes	76	61	51	75
Never	24	27	14	21
	126	100	68	100

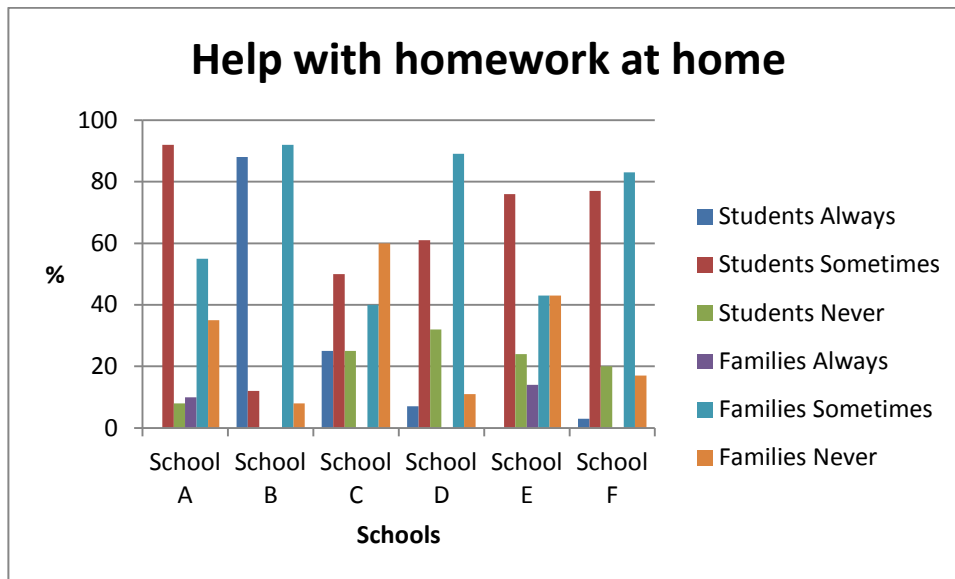


Figure 6.37: Frequency chart - Help with homework at home.

Table 6.40: Frequency chart - Help with homework at home.

	Students						Families					
	Always		Sometimes		Never		Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	11	92	2	8	2	10	11	55	7	35
School B	23	88	3	12	0	0	0	0	11	92	1	8
School C	1	25	2	50	2	25	0	0	2	40	3	60
School D	2	7	17	61	9	32	0	0	16	89	2	11
School E	0	0	19	76	6	24	1	14	3	43	3	43
School F	1	3	24	77	6	20	0	0	5	83	1	17

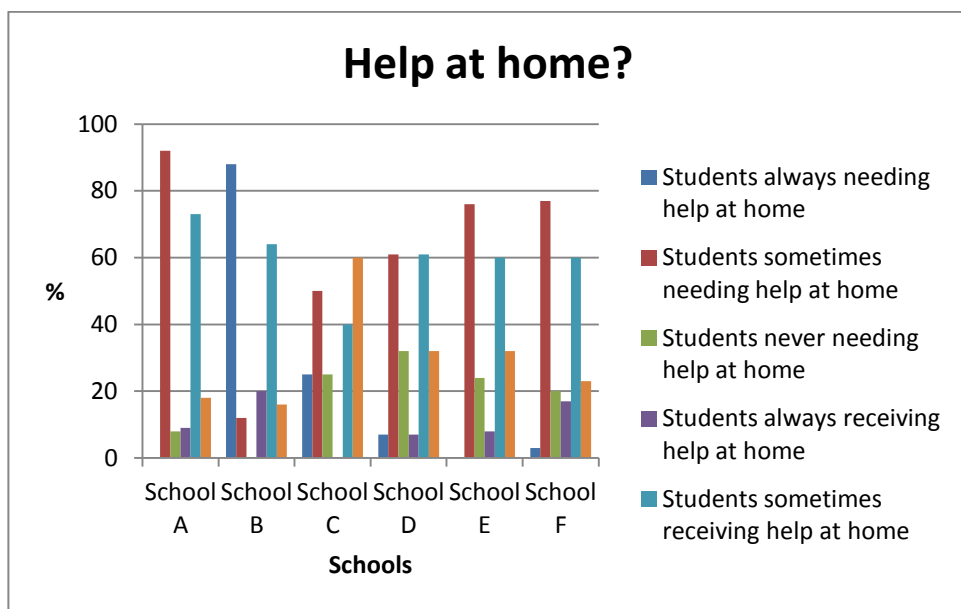


Figure 6.38: Frequency chart – Needing and receiving help with homework at home.

Table 6.41: Frequency chart - Needing and receiving help with homework at home.

	Students											
	Needing help						Receiving help					
	Always		Sometimes		Never		Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	11	92	1	8	1	9	8	73	2	18
School B	23	88	3	12	0	0	5	20	16	64	4	16
School C	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0	2	40	3	60
School D	2	7	17	61	9	32	2	7	17	61	9	32
School E	0	0	19	76	6	24	2	8	15	60	8	32
School F	1	3	24	77	6	20	5	17	18	60	7	23

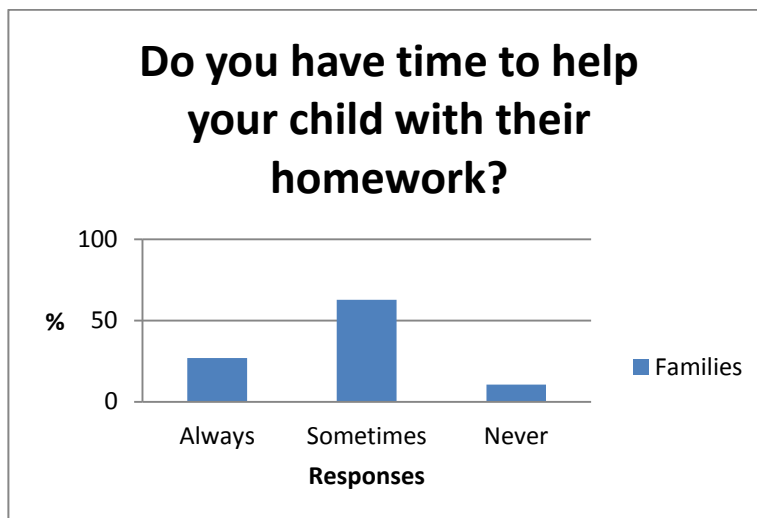


Figure 6.39: Frequency chart - Do you have time to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.42: Frequency chart - Do you have time to help your child with their homework?

	Families	
	n	%
Always	18	27
Sometimes	42	63
Never	7	10
	67	100

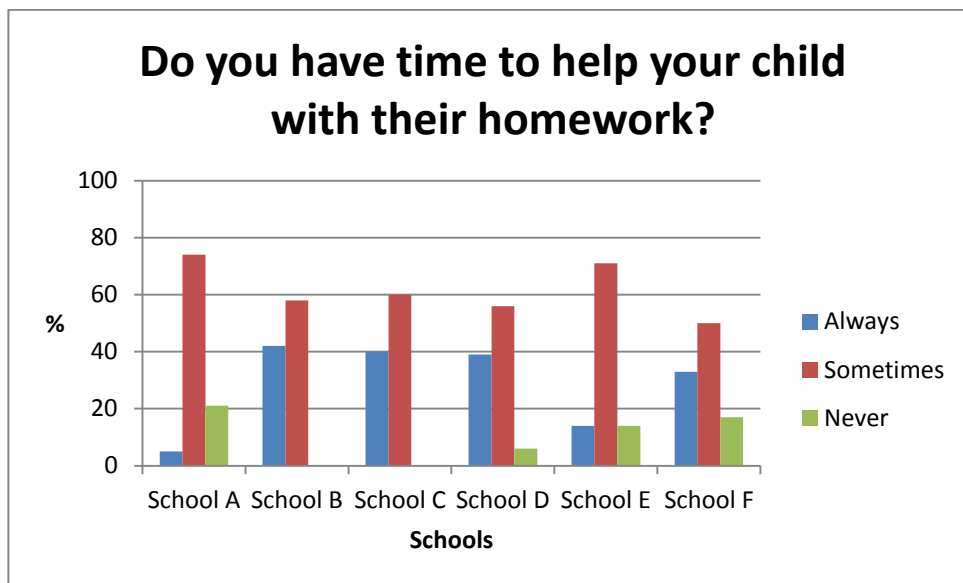


Figure 6.40: Frequency chart - Do you have time to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.43: Frequency chart - Do you have time to help your child with their homework?

	Families					
	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	5	14	74	4	21
School B	5	42	7	58	0	0
School C	2	40	3	60	0	0
School D	7	39	10	56	1	6
School E	1	14	5	71	1	14
School F	2	33	3	50	1	17

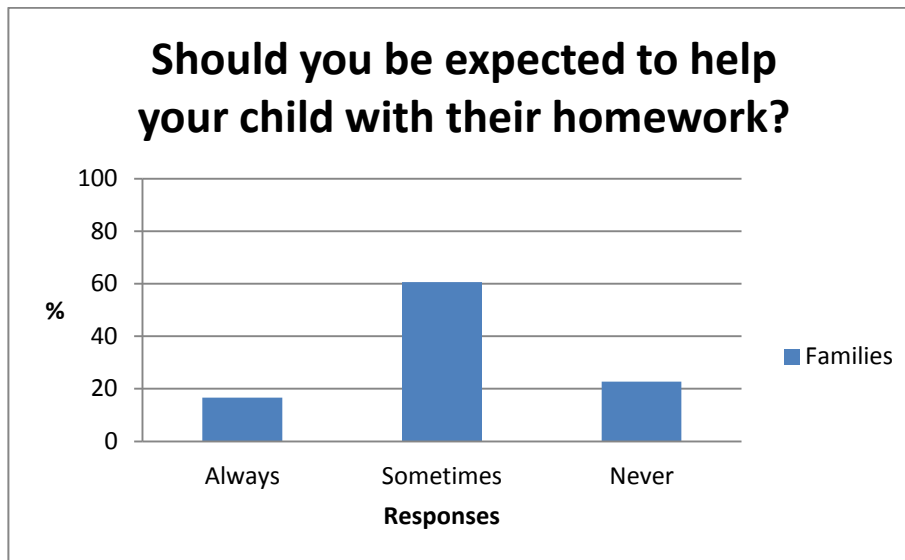


Figure 6.41: Frequency chart - Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.44: Frequency chart - Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?

	Families	
	n	%
Always	11	17
Sometimes	40	60
Never	15	23
	66	100

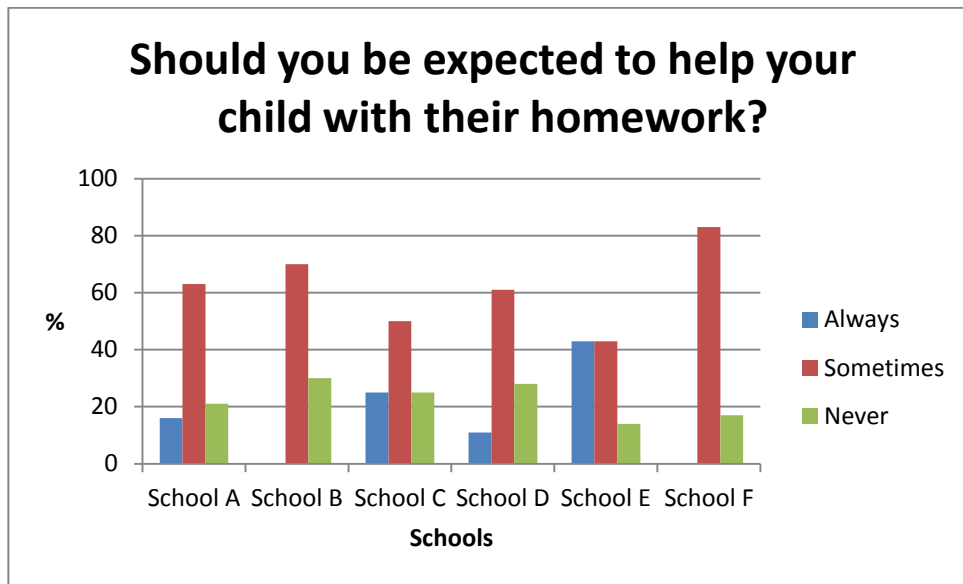


Figure 6.42: Frequency chart - Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.45: Frequency chart - Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?

Families						
	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	3	16	12	63	4	21
School B	0	0	7	70	3	30
School C	2	25	2	50	1	25
School D	3	11	11	61	5	28
School E	3	43	3	43	1	14
School F	0	0	5	83	1	17

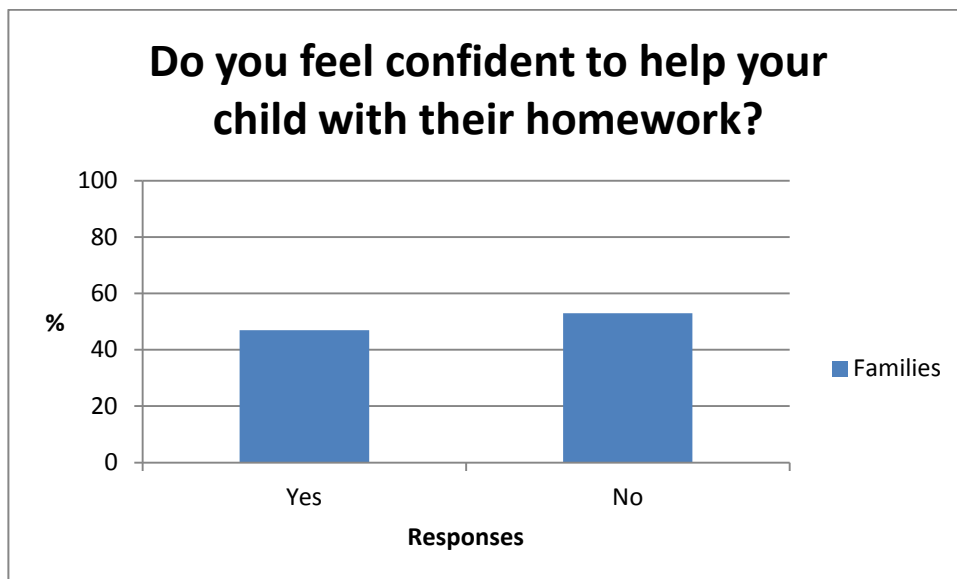


Figure 6.43: Frequency chart - Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.46: Frequency chart - Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?

	Families	
	n	%
Yes	31	47
No	35	53
	66	100

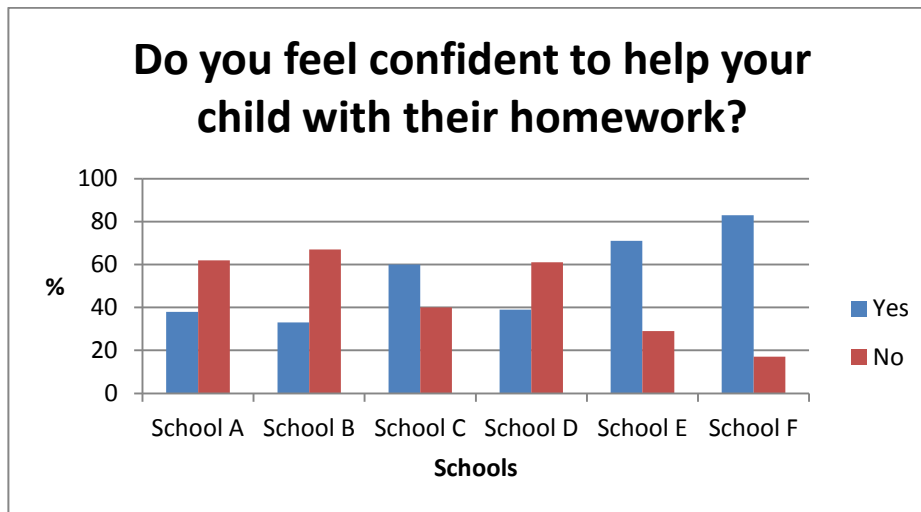


Figure 6.44: Frequency chart - Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?

Table 6.47: Frequency chart - Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?

Families				
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	8	38	13	62
School B	3	33	6	67
School C	3	60	2	40
School D	7	39	11	61
School E	5	71	2	29
School F	5	83	1	17

Table 6.48: Frequency chart - Responses to questions related to families helping with homework

	Families		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Do you help with homework?	4%	75%	21%
Do you have time to help your child with their homework?	27%	63%	10%
Should you be expected to help your child with their homework?	17%	61%	23%
Do you feel confident to help your child with their homework?	Yes 47%	No 53%	n/a

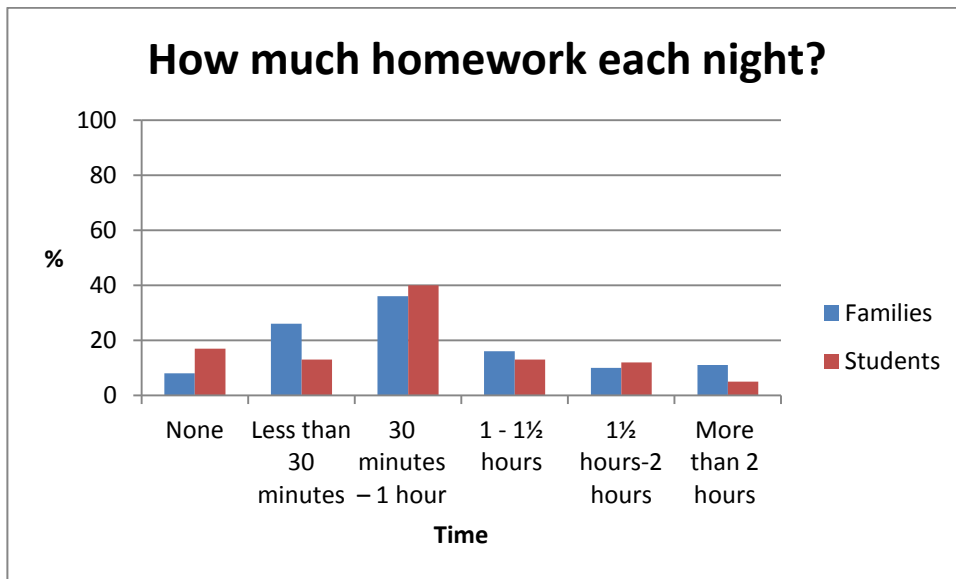


Figure 6.45: Frequency chart - How much homework each night?

Table 6.49: Frequency chart - How much homework each night?

	Families		Students	
	n	%	n	%
None	5	8	19	17
Less than 30 minutes	16	26	14	13
30 minutes – 1 hour	22	36	45	40
1 - 1½ hours	10	16	14	13
1½ hours-2 hours	6	10	13	12
More than 2 hours	7	11	6	5
	61	100	111	100

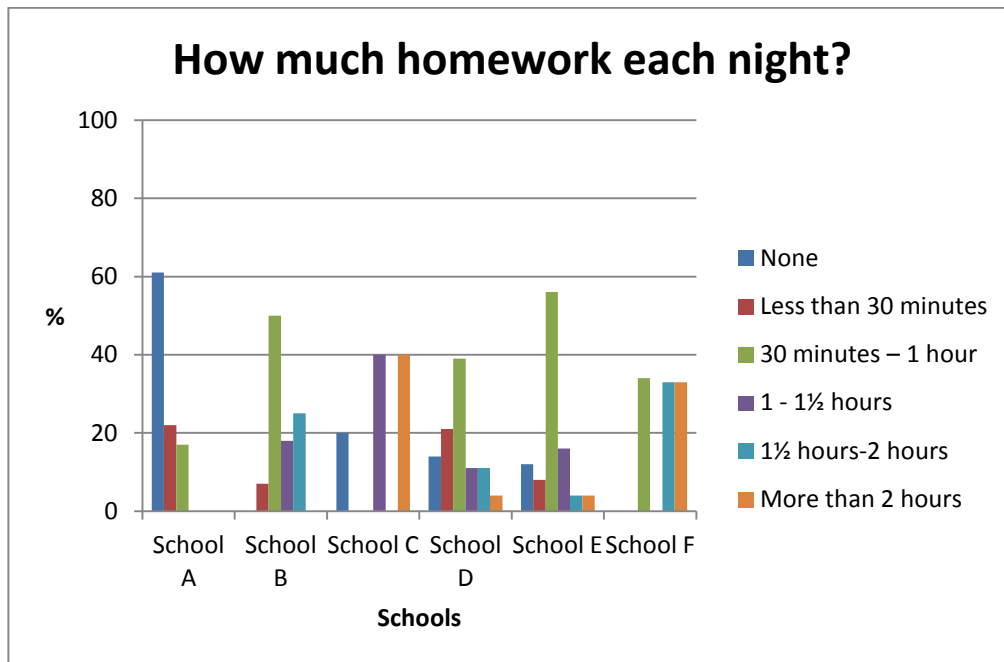


Figure 6.46: Frequency chart - How much homework each night? Student responses

Table 6.50: Frequency chart - How much homework each night? Student responses

	School A		School B		School C		School D		School E		School F	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	11	61	0	0	1	20	4	14	3	12	0	0
Less than 30 minutes	4	22	2	7	0	0	6	21	2	8	0	0
30 minutes – 1 hour	3	17	14	50	0	0	11	39	14	56	3	34
1 - 1½ hours	0	0	5	18	2	40	3	11	4	16	0	0
1½ hours - 2 hours	0	0	7	25	0	0	3	11	1	4	2	33
More than 2 hours	0	0	0	0	2	40	1	4	1	4	2	33
	18	100	28	100	5	100	28	100	25	100	7	100

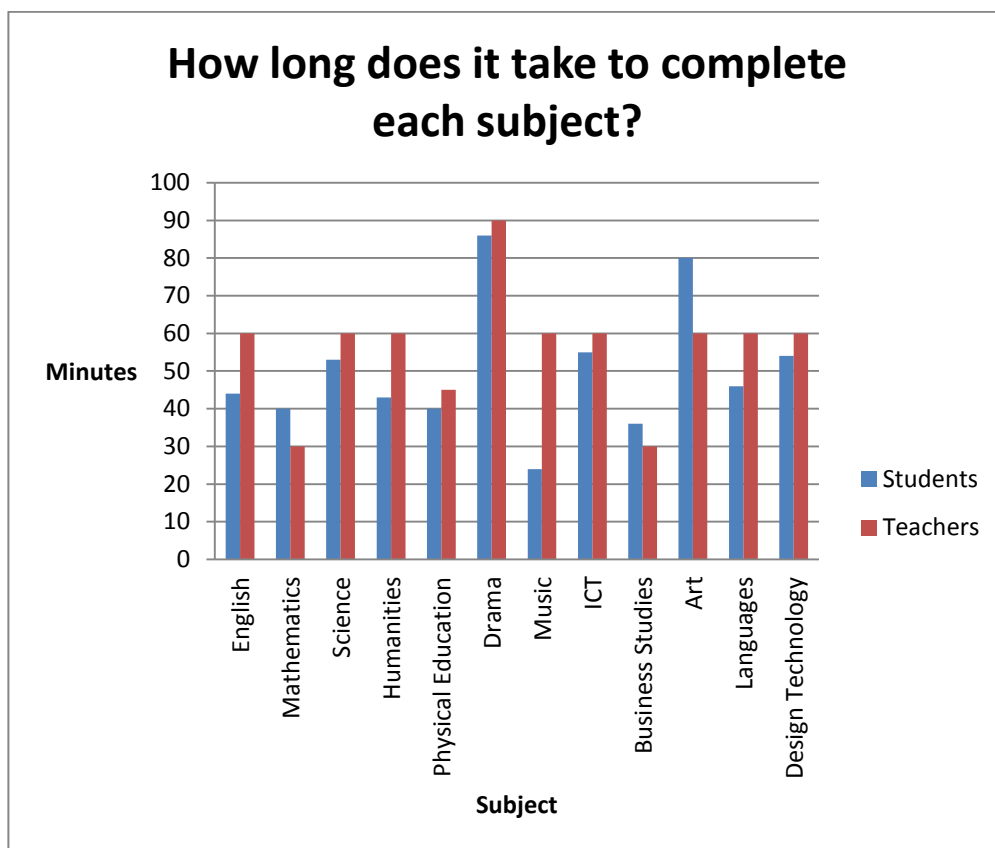


Figure 6.47: Frequency chart - How long does it take to complete each subject?

Table 6.51: Frequency chart - How long does it take to complete each subject?

	Students	Teachers	Difference
	Minutes		
English	44	60	16
Mathematics	40	30	-10
Science	53	60	7
Humanities	43	60	17
Physical Education	40	45	5
Drama	86	90	4
Music	24	60	36
ICT	55	60	5
Business Studies	36	30	-6
Art	80	60	-20
Languages	46	60	14
Design Technology	54	60	6

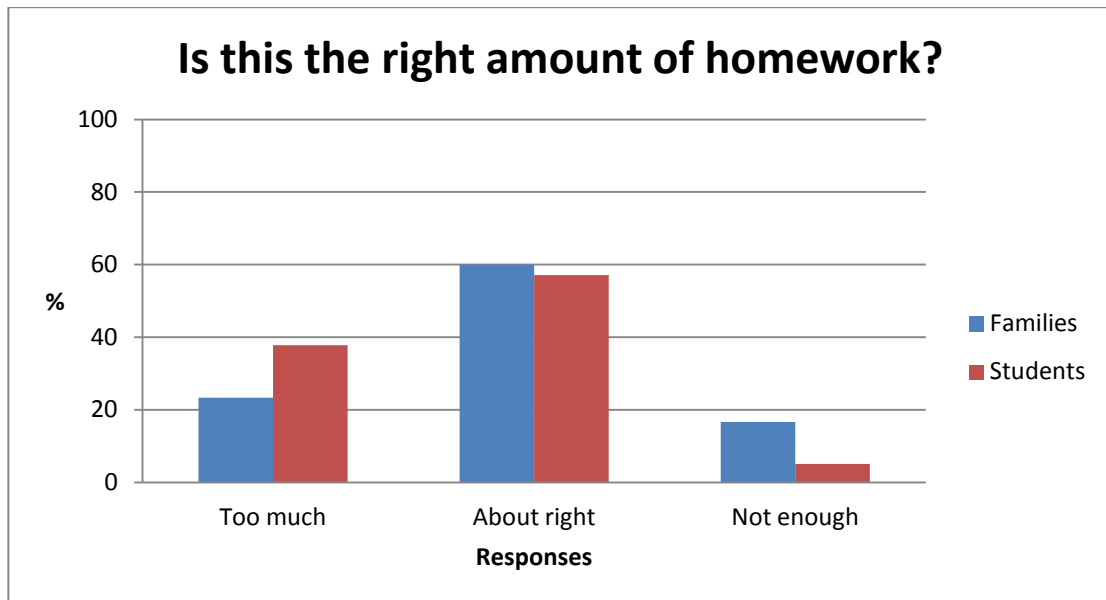


Figure 6.48: Frequency chart - Is this the right amount of homework?

Table 6.52: Frequency chart - Is this the right amount of homework?

	Families		Students	
	n	%	n	%
Too much	14	23	46	39
About right	36	60	67	56
Not enough	10	17	6	5
	60	100	119	100

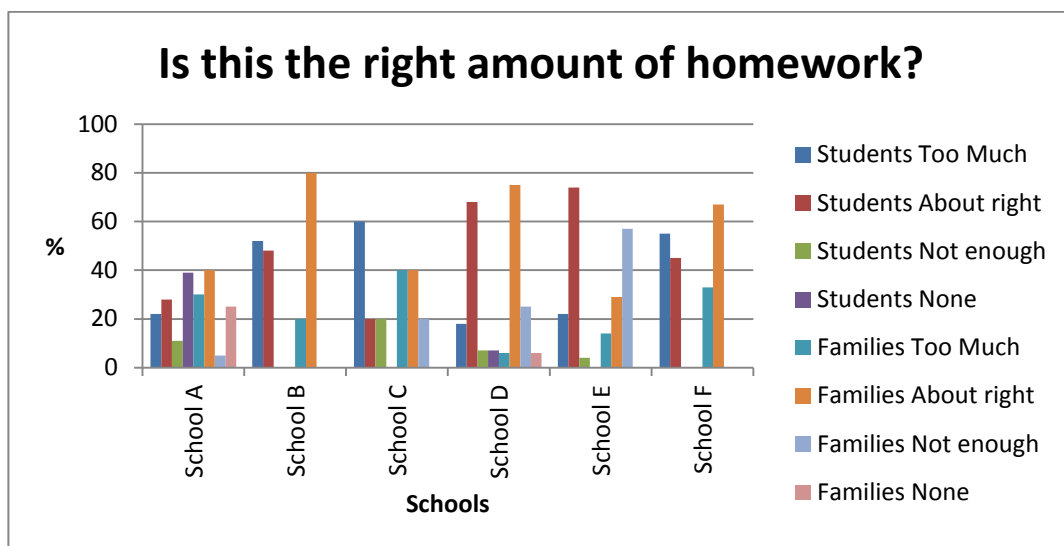


Figure 6.49: Frequency chart - Is this the right amount of homework?

Table 6.53: Frequency chart - Is this the right amount of homework?

			School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Students	Too much	n	4	13	3	5	5	16
		%	22	52	60	18	22	55
	About right	n	5	12	1	19	17	13
		%	28	48	20	68	74	45
	Not enough	n	2	0	1	2	1	0
		%	11	0	20	7	4	0
Families	None	n	7	0	0	2	0	0
		%	39	0	0	7	0	0
	Too much	n	6	2	2	1	1	2
		%	30	20	40	6	14	33
	About right	n	8	8	2	12	2	4
		%	40	80	40	75	29	67
	Not enough	n	1	0	1	4	4	0
		%	5	0	20	25	57	0
	None	n	5	0	0	1	0	0
		%	25	0	0	6	0	0

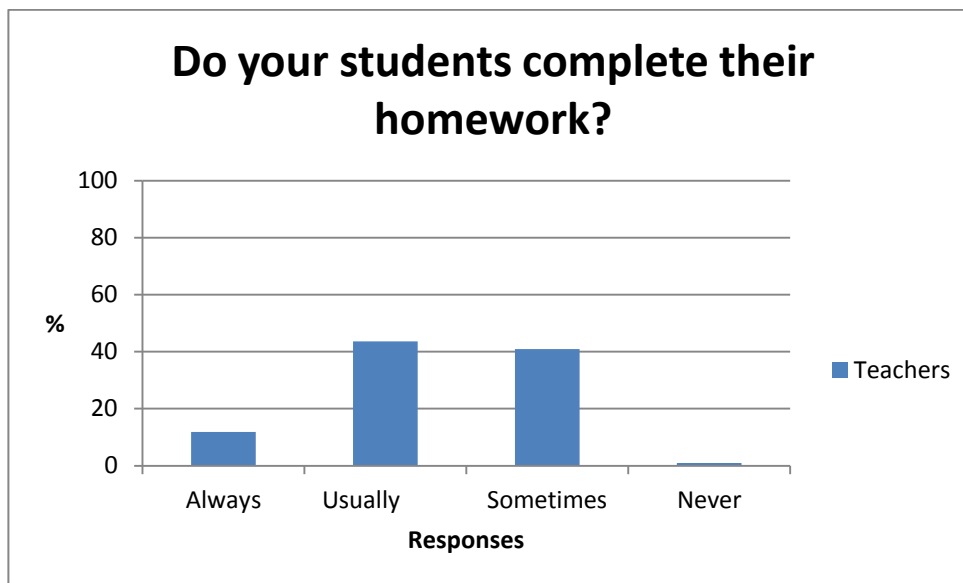


Figure 6.50: Frequency chart - Do your students complete their homework?

Table 6.54: Frequency chart - Do your students complete their homework?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Always	12	11
Usually	47	45
Sometimes	45	43
Never	1	1
	105	100

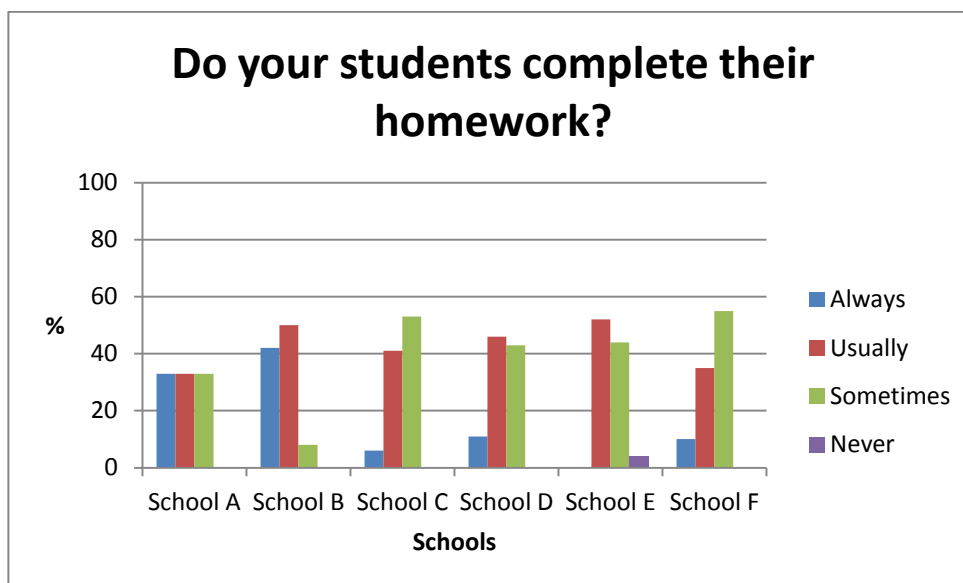


Figure 6.51: Frequency chart - Do your students complete their homework?

Table 6.55: Frequency chart - Do your students complete their homework?

	Teachers							
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	33	1	33	1	33	0	0
School B	5	42	6	50	1	8	0	0
School C	1	6	7	41	9	53	0	0
School D	3	11	13	46	12	43	0	0
School E	0	0	13	52	11	44	1	4
School F	2	10	7	35	11	55	0	0

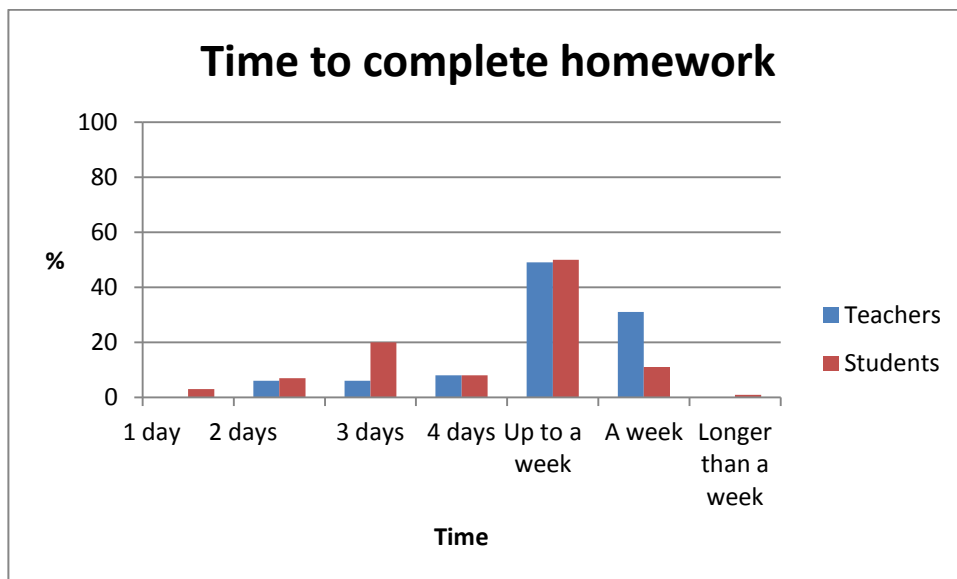


Figure 6.52: Frequency chart - Time given to complete homework?

Table 6.56: Frequency chart - Time given to complete homework?

	Teachers		Students	
	n	%	n	%
1 day	0	0	4	3
2 days	3	6	8	7
3 days	3	6	24	20
4 days	4	8	10	8
Up to a week	24	49	60	50
A week	15	31	14	11
Longer than a week	0	0	1	1
	49	100	121	100

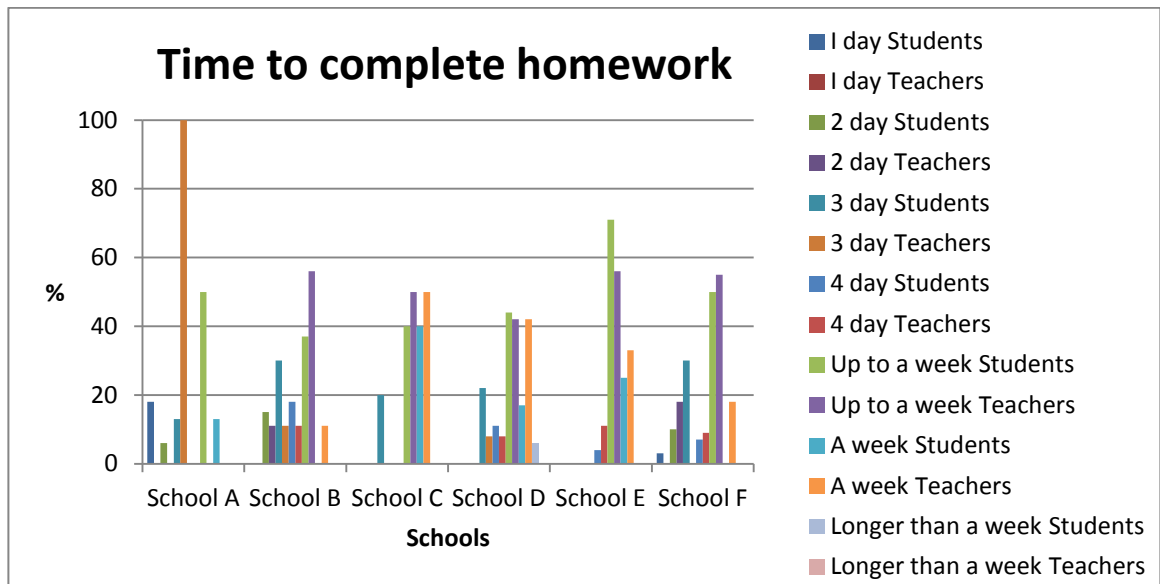


Figure 6.53: Frequency chart - Time given to complete homework?

Table 6.57: Frequency chart - Time given to complete homework?

		School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
1 day Students	n	3	0	0	0	0	1
	%	18	0	0	0	0	3
1 day Teachers	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 day Students	n	1	4	0	0	0	3
	%	6	15	0	0	0	10
2 day Teachers	n	0	1	0	0	0	2
	%	0	11	0	0	0	18
3 day Students	n	2	8	1	4	0	9
	%	13	30	20	22	0	30
3 day Teachers	n	1	1	0	1	0	0
	%	100	11	0	8	0	0
4 day Students	n	0	5	0	2	1	2
	%	0	18	0	11	4	7
4 day Teachers	n	0	1	0	1	1	1
	%	0	11	0	8	11	9
Up to a week Students	n	8	10	2	8	17	15
	%	50	37	40	44	71	50
Up to a week Teachers	n	0	5	3	5	5	6
	%	0	56	50	42	56	55
A week Students	n	2	0	2	3	6	0
	%	13	0	40	17	25	0
A week Teachers	n	0	1	3	5	3	2
	%	0	11	50	42	33	18
Longer than a week Students	n	0	0	0	1	0	0
	%	0	0	0	6	0	0
Longer than a week Teachers	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0

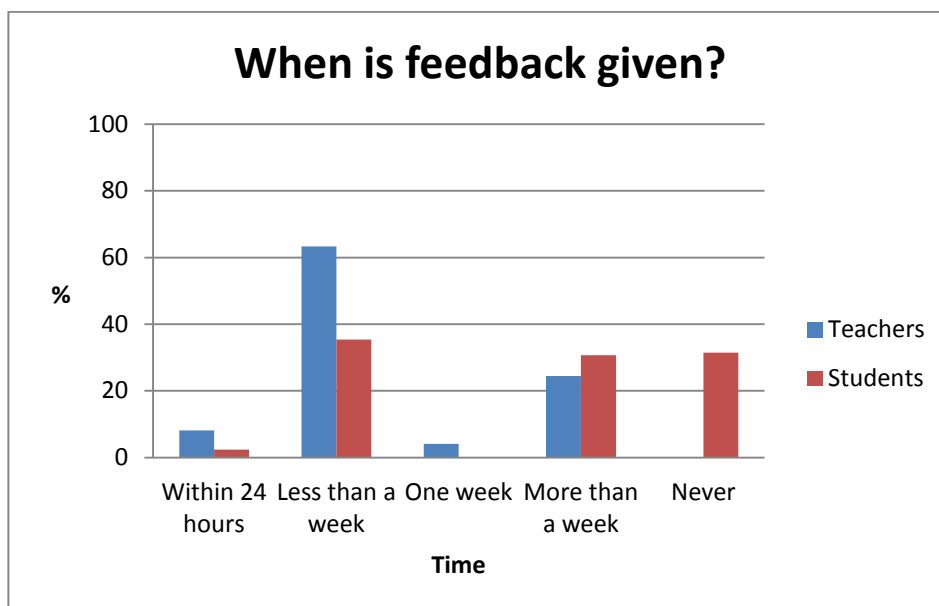


Figure 6.54: Frequency chart - When is feedback given?

Table 6.58: Frequency chart - When is feedback given?

	Teachers		Students	
	n	%	n	%
Within 24 hours	4	8	3	2
Less than a week	31	64	44	35
One week	2	4	0	0
More than a week	11	24	39	31
Never	0	0	40	31
	48	100	126	100

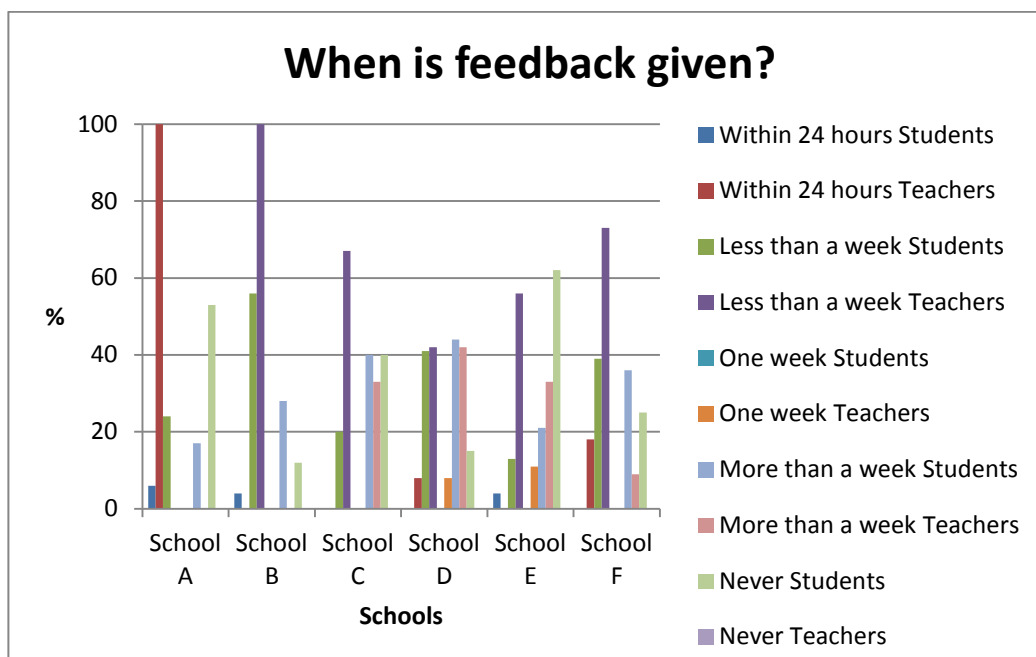


Figure 6.55: Frequency chart - When is feedback given?

Table 6.59: Frequency chart - When is feedback given?

		School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Within 24 hours Students	n	1	1	0	0	1	0
	%	6	4	0	0	4	0
Within 24 hours Teachers	n	1	0	0	1	0	2
	%	100	0	0	8	0	18
Less than a week Students	n	4	14	1	11	3	11
	%	24	56	20	41	13	39
Less than a week Teachers	n	0	9	4	5	5	8
	%	0	100	67	42	56	73
One week Students	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0
One week Teachers	n	0	0	0	1	1	0
	%	0	0	0	8	11	0
More than a week Students	n	3	7	2	12	5	10
	%	17	28	40	44	21	36
More than a week Teachers	n	0	0	2	5	3	1
	%	0	0	33	42	33	9
Never Students	n	9	3	2	4	15	7
	%	53	12	40	15	62	25
Never Teachers	n	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0

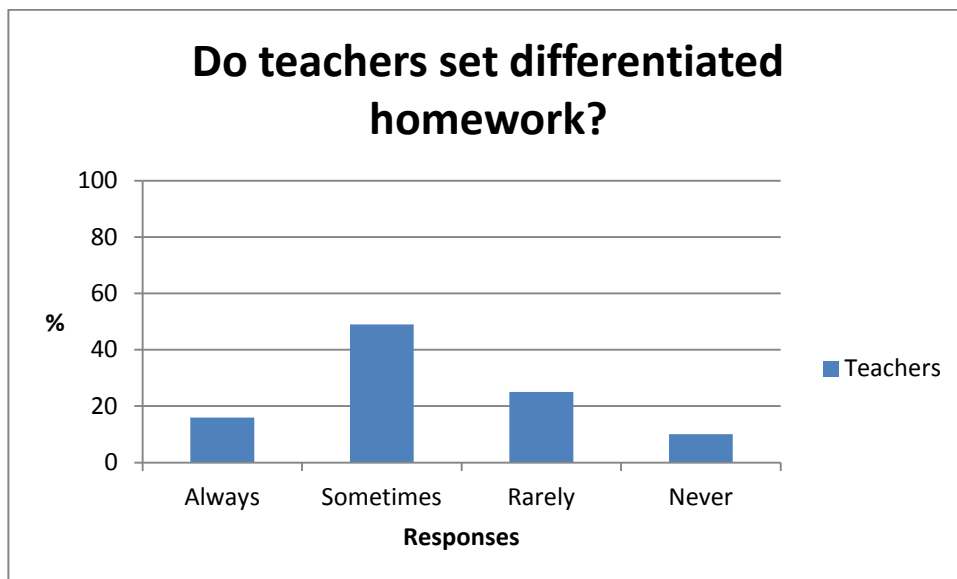


Figure 6.56: Frequency chart - Do teachers set differentiated homework?

Table 6.60: Frequency chart - Do teachers set differentiated homework?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Always	8	16
Sometimes	25	49
Rarely	13	25
Never	5	10
	51	100

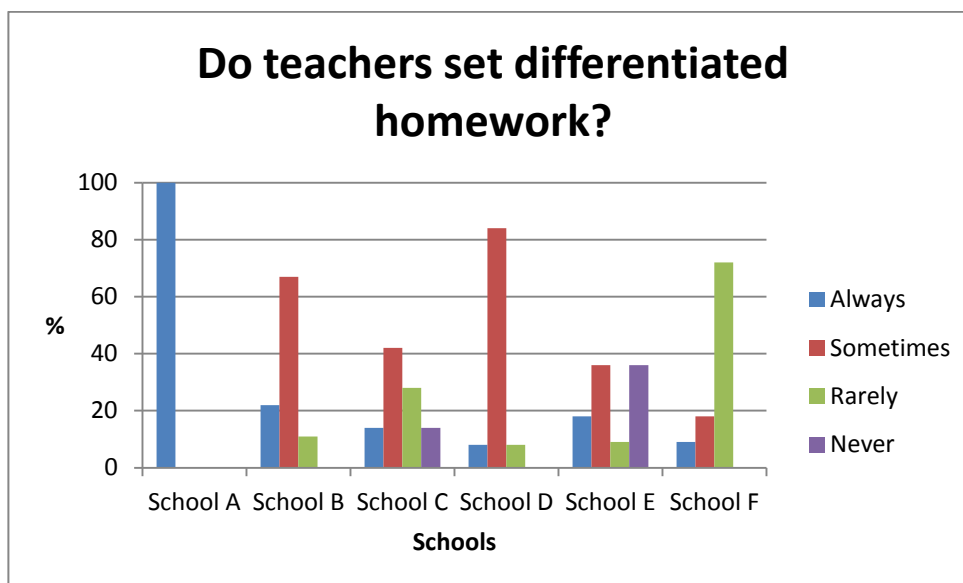


Figure 6.57: Frequency chart - Do teachers set differentiated homework?

Table 6.61: Frequency chart - Do teachers set differentiated homework?

	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	2	22	6	67	1	11	0	0
School C	1	14	3	42	2	28	1	14
School D	1	8	10	84	1	8	0	0
School E	2	18	4	36	1	9	4	36
School F	1	9	2	18	8	72	0	0

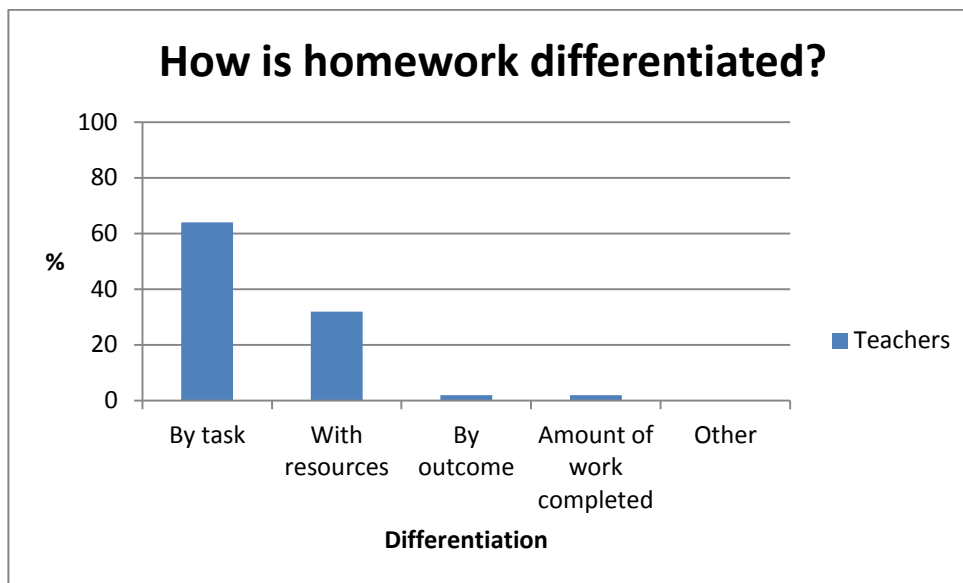


Figure 6.58: Frequency chart - How is homework differentiated?

Table 6.62: Frequency chart - How is homework differentiated?

	Teachers	
	n	%
By task	32	64
With resources	16	32
By outcome	1	2
Amount of work completed	1	2
Other	0	0
	50	100

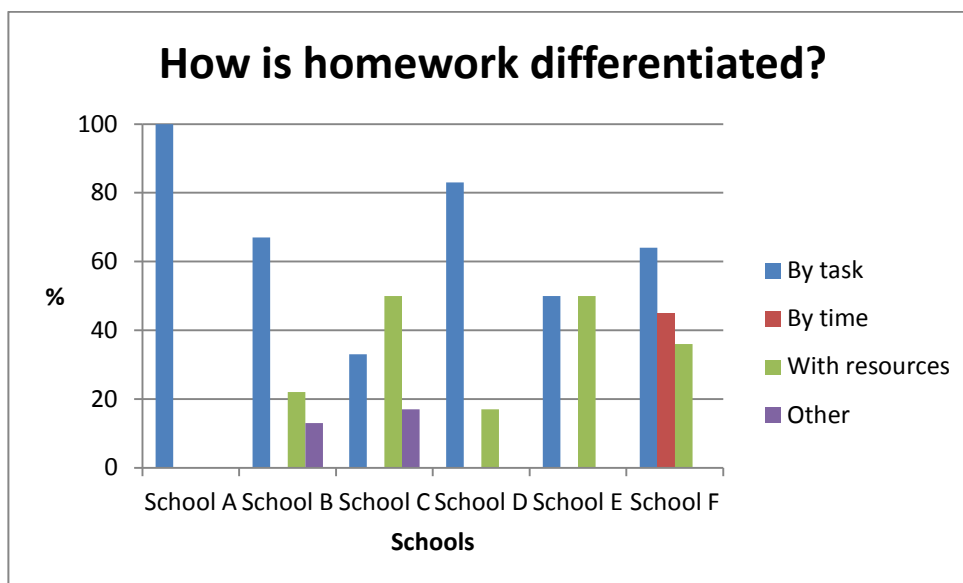


Figure 6.59: Frequency chart - How is homework differentiated?

Table 6.63: Frequency chart - How is homework differentiated?

	By task		By time		With resources		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	6	67	0	0	2	22	1	13
School C	2	33	0	0	3	50	1	17
School D	10	83	0	0	2	17	0	0
School E	4	50	0	0	4	50	0	0
School F	9	64	0	0	5	36	0	0

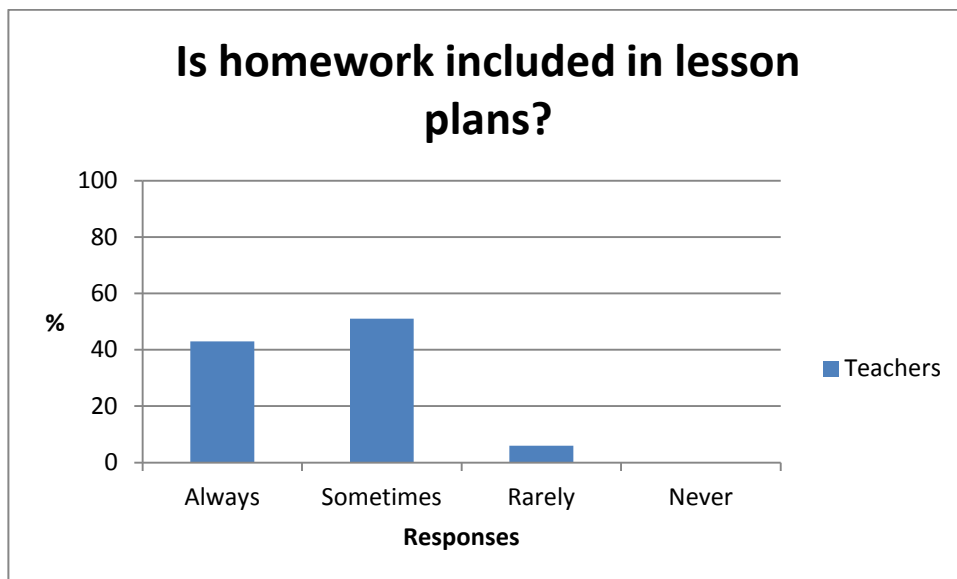


Figure 6.60: Frequency chart - Is homework included in lesson plans?

Table 6.64: Frequency chart - Is homework included in lesson plans?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Always	22	43
Sometimes	26	51
Rarely	3	6
Never	0	0
	51	100

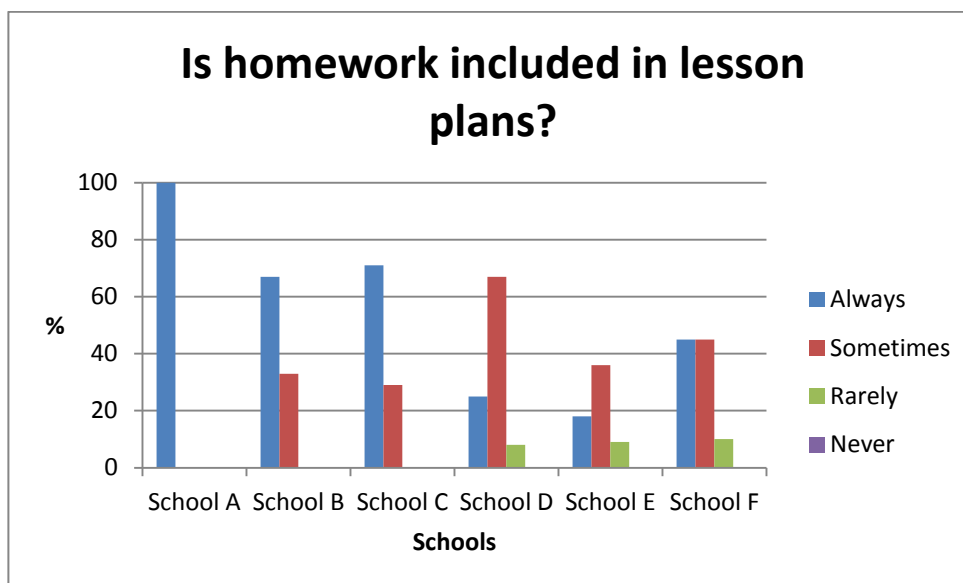


Figure 6.61: Frequency chart - Is homework included in lesson plans?

Table 6.65: Frequency chart - Is homework included in lesson plans?

	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
School B	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
School C	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0
School D	3	25	8	67	1	8	0	0
School E	2	18	8	36	1	9	0	0
School F	5	45	5	45	1	10	0	0

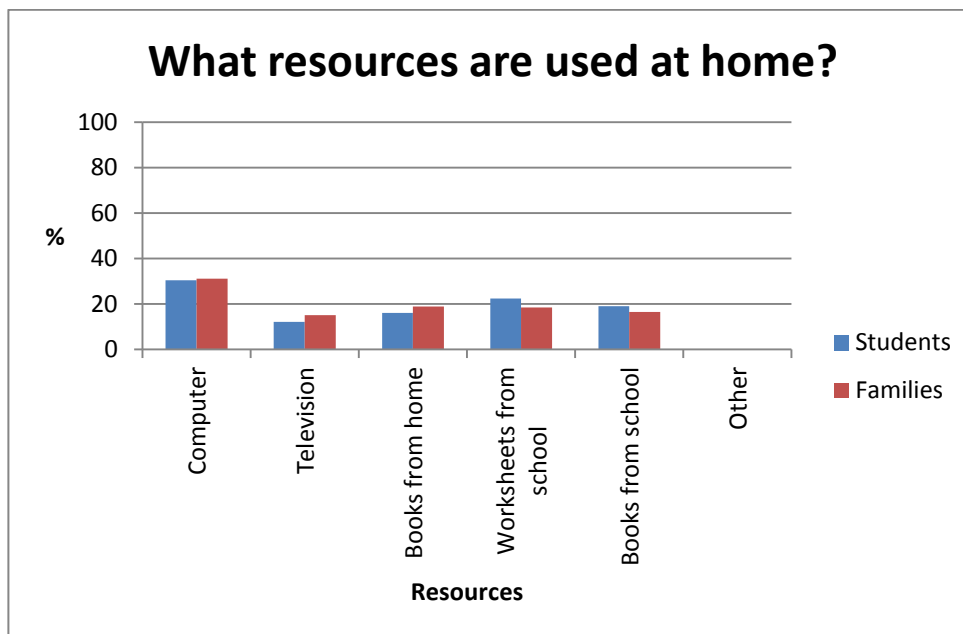


Figure 6.62: Frequency chart - What resources are used at home?

Table 6.66: Frequency chart - What resources are used at home?

	Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%
Computer	110	30	64	31
Television	44	12	31	15
Book from home	57	16	39	20
Worksheets from school	81	22	38	18
Books from school	69	20	34	16
Other	0	0	0	0
	361	100	206	100

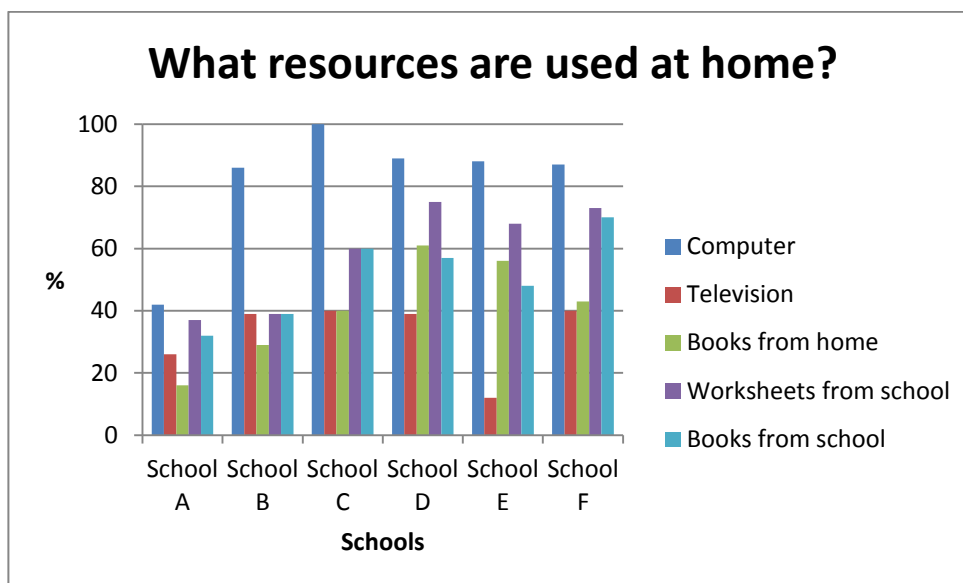


Figure 6.63: Frequency chart - What resources are used at home?

Table 6.67: Frequency chart - What resources are used at home?

	Students									
	Computer		Television		Books from home		Worksheets from school		Books from school	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	8	42	5	26	3	16	7	37	6	32
School B	24	86	11	39	8	29	11	39	11	39
School C	5	100	2	40	2	40	3	60	3	60
School D	25	89	11	39	17	61	21	75	16	57
School E	22	88	3	12	14	56	17	68	12	48
School F	26	87	12	40	13	43	22	73	21	70

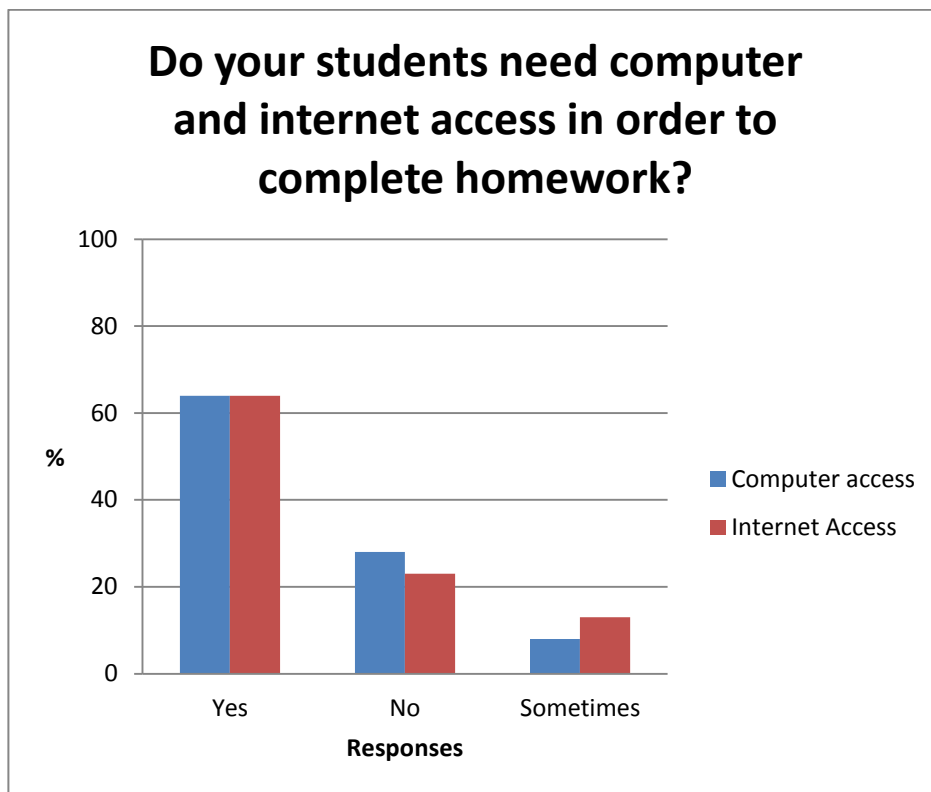


Figure 6.64: Frequency chart - Do your students need computer and internet access in order to complete homework?

Table 6.68: Frequency chart - Do your students need computer and internet access in order to complete homework?

	Yes		No		Sometimes	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Computer access	32	64	14	28	4	8
Internet Access	32	64	12	23	7	13

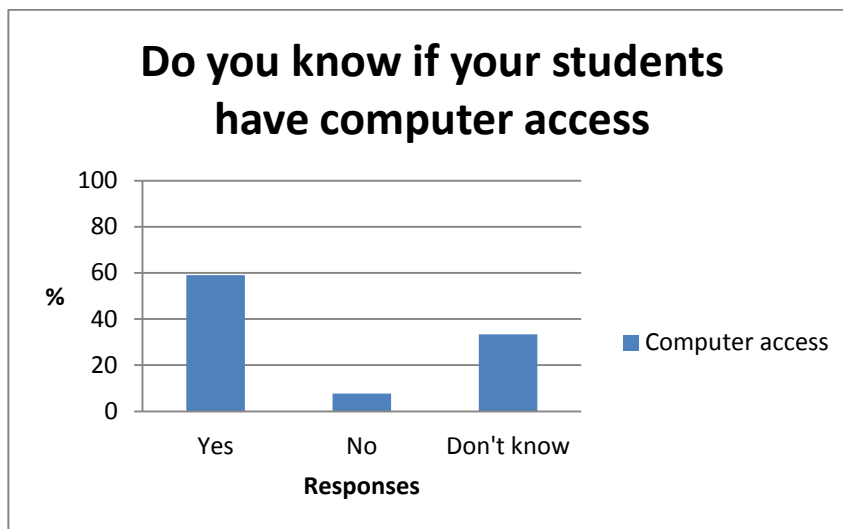


Figure 6.65: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have computer access?

Table 6.69: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have computer access?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Yes	23	59
No	3	8
Don't know	13	33
	39	100

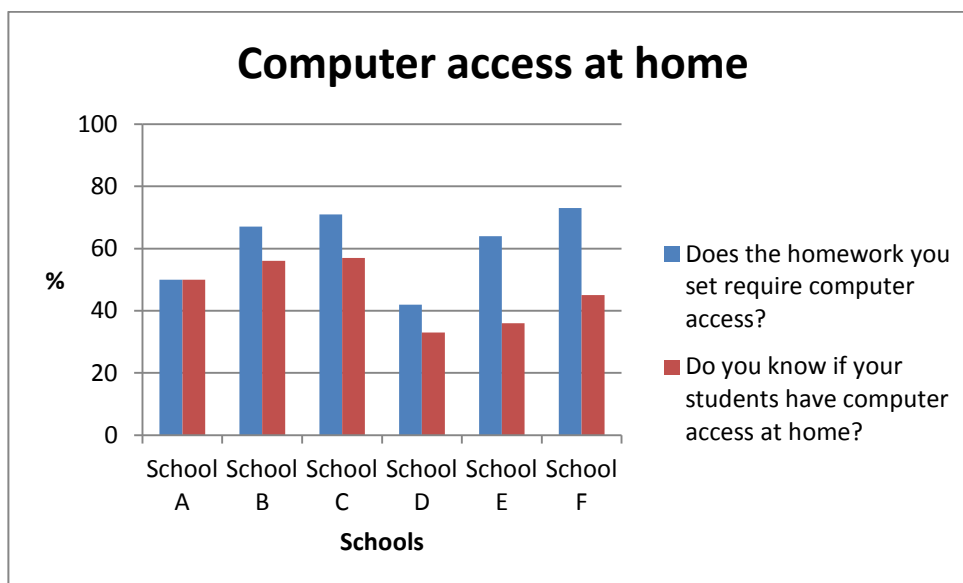


Figure 6.66: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have computer access?

Table 6.70: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have computer access?

	Teachers			
	Does the homework you set require computer access?		Do you know if your students have computer access at home?	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	50	1	50
School B	6	67	5	56
School C	5	71	4	57
School D	5	42	4	33
School E	7	64	4	36
School F	8	73	5	45

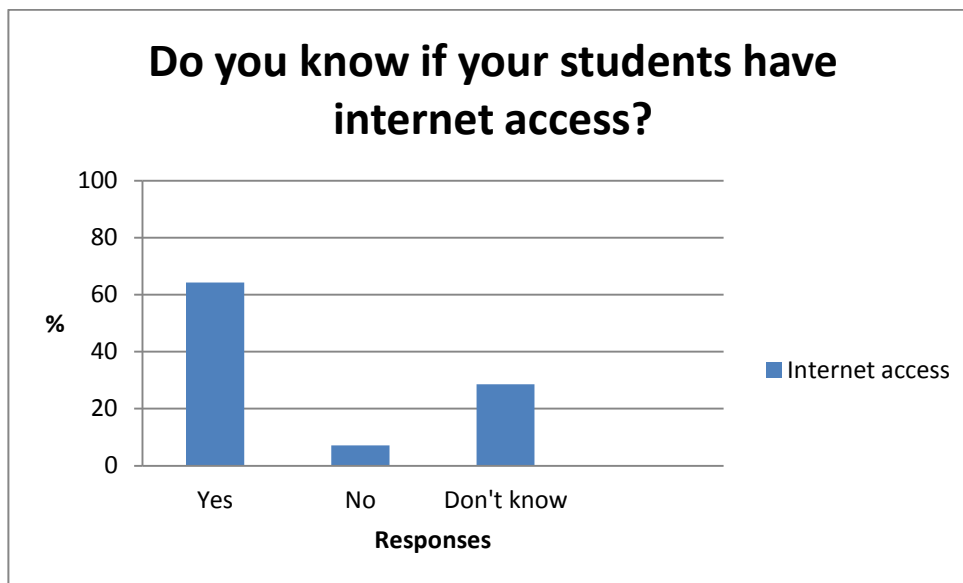


Figure 6.67: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have internet access?

Table 6.71: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have internet access?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Yes	27	64
No	3	7
Don't know	12	29
	42	100

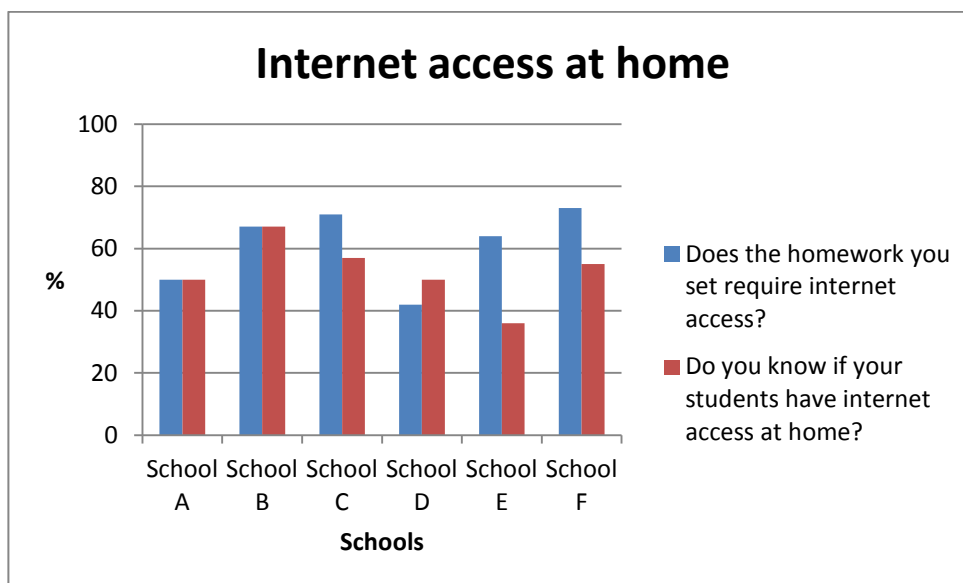


Figure 6.68: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have internet access?

Table 6.72: Frequency chart - Do you know if your students have internet access?

	Teachers			
	Does the homework you set require internet access?		Do you know if your students have internet access at home?	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	50	1	50
School B	6	67	6	67
School C	5	71	4	57
School D	5	42	6	50
School E	7	64	4	36
School F	8	73	6	55

Table 6.73: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to computer and internet access in order to complete homework at home

	Teachers
Do your students need computer and internet access in order to complete homework?	50%
Do you know if your students have internet access?	64%
Do you know if your students have computer access?	59%

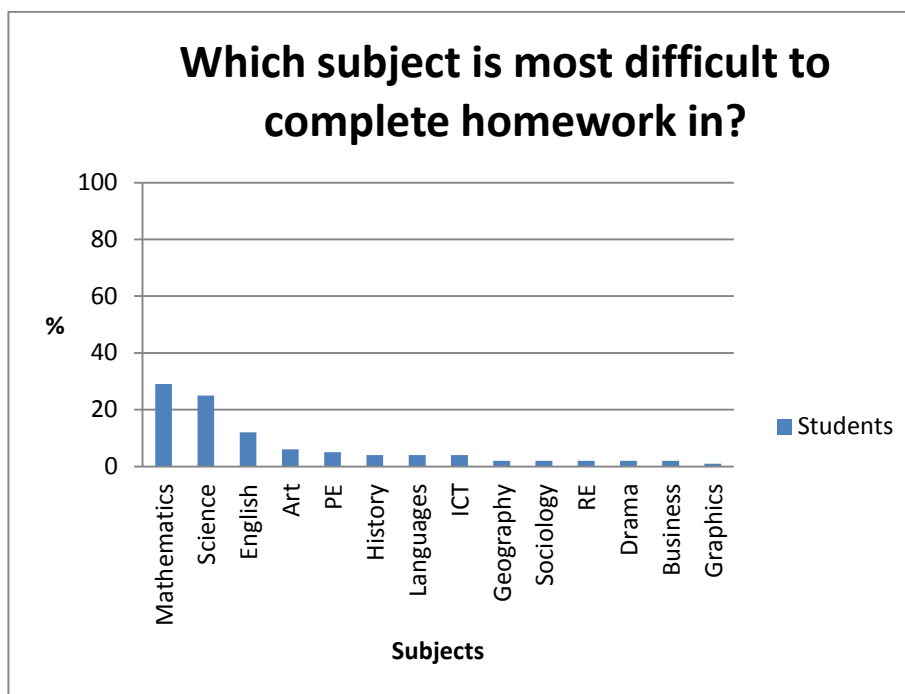


Figure 6.69: Frequency chart - Which subject is most difficult to complete homework in?

Table 6.74: Frequency chart - Which subject is most difficult to complete homework in?

	Students	
	n	%
Mathematics	35	29
Science	30	25
English	15	12
Art	6	6
PE	5	5
History	4	4
Languages	4	4
ICT	4	4
Geography	3	2
Sociology	3	2
RE	3	2
Drama	3	2
Business	3	2
Graphics	1	1
	119	100

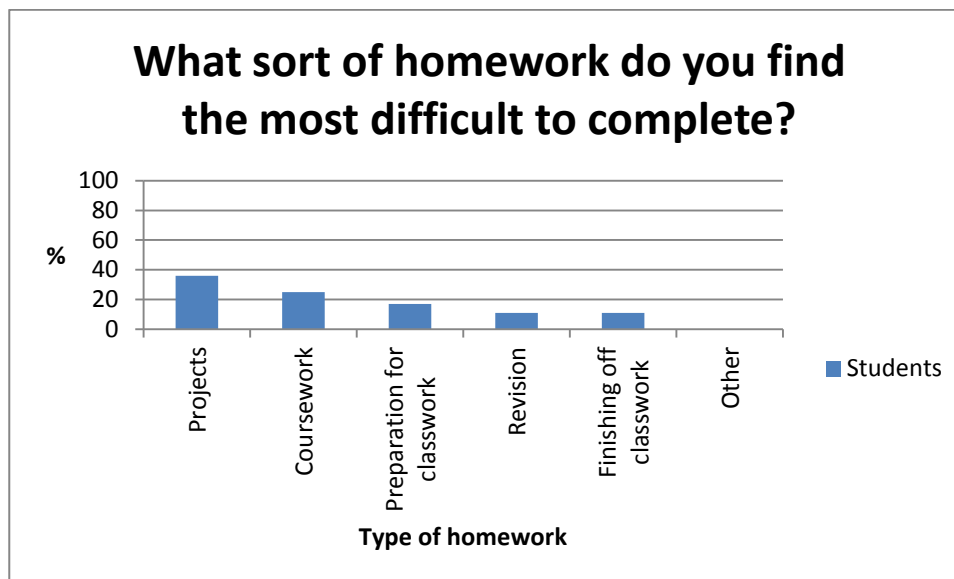


Figure 6.70: Frequency chart - What sort of homework is most difficult to complete?

Table 6.75: Frequency chart - What sort of homework is most difficult to complete?

	Students	
	n	%
Projects	73	36
Coursework	51	25
Preparation for classwork	36	17
Revision	22	11
Finishing off classwork	23	11
Other	0	0
	205	100

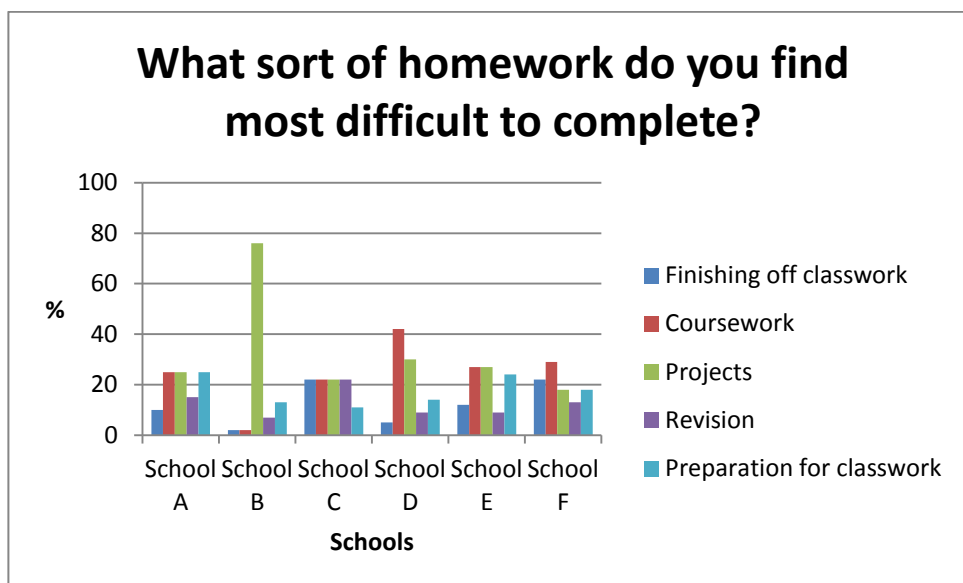


Figure 6.71: Frequency chart - What sort of homework is most difficult to complete?

Table 6.76: Frequency chart - What sort of homework is most difficult to complete?

	Finishing off classwork		Coursework		Projects		Revision		Preparation for classwork	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	2	10	5	25	5	25	3	15	5	25
School B	1	2	1	2	34	76	3	7	6	13
School C	2	22	2	22	2	22	2	22	1	11
School D	2	5	18	42	13	30	4	9	6	14
School E	4	12	9	27	9	27	3	9	8	24
School F	12	22	16	29	10	18	7	13	10	18

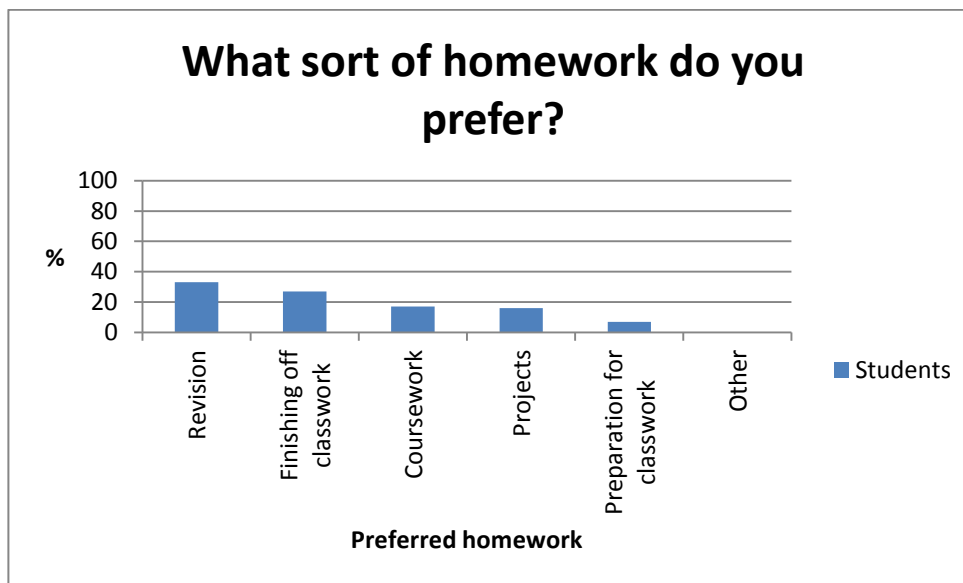


Figure 6.72: Frequency chart - What sort of homework do you prefer?

Table 6.77: Frequency chart - What sort of homework do you prefer?

	Students	
	n	%
Revision	68	33
Finishing off classwork	56	27
Coursework	36	17
Projects	34	16
Preparation for classwork	15	7
	209	100

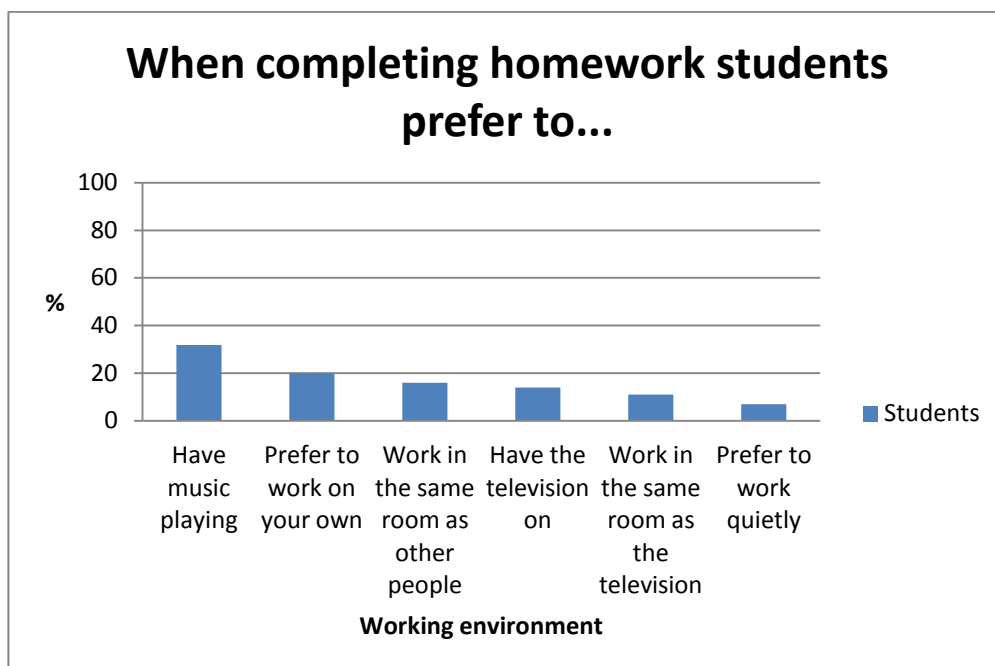


Figure 6.73: Frequency chart - When completing homework students prefer to...

Table 6.78: Frequency chart - When completing homework students prefer to...

	Students	
	n	%
Have music playing	87	32
Prefer to work on your own	57	20
Work in the same room as other people	43	16
Have the television on	38	14
Work in the same room as the television	31	11
Prefer to work quietly	18	7
	274	100

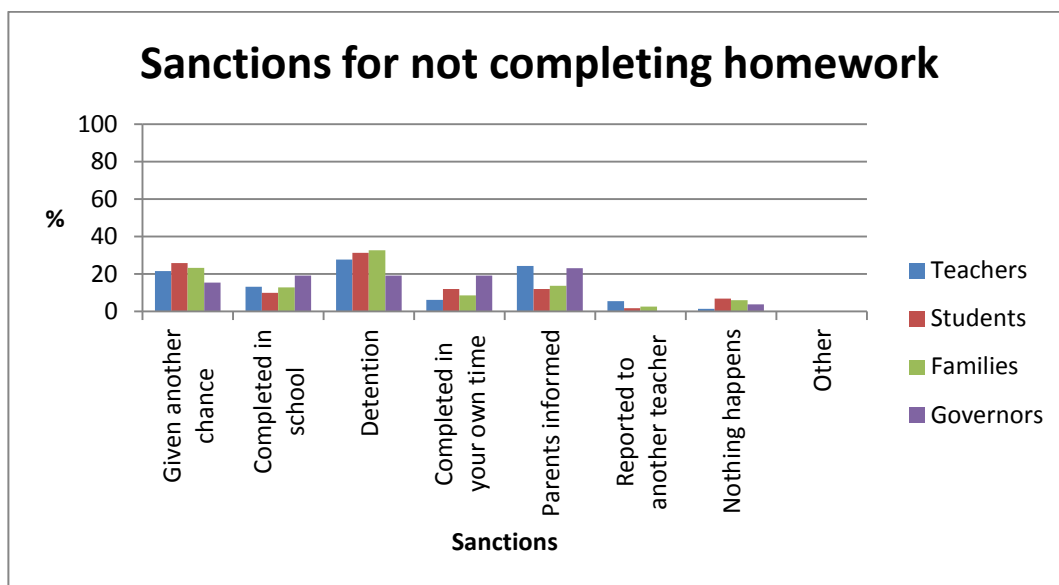


Figure 6.74: Frequency chart - Sanctions for not completing homework?

Table 6.79: Frequency chart - Sanctions for not completing homework?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governor s	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Given another chance	31	22	83	26	27	23	4	16
Completed in school	19	13	32	10	15	13	5	19
Detention	40	28	101	31	38	33	5	19
Completed in your own time	9	6	39	12	10	8	5	19
Parents informed	35	24	39	12	16	14	6	23
Reported to another teacher	8	6	6	2	3	3	0	0
Nothing happens	2	1	22	7	7	6	1	4
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	144	100	322	100	116	100	26	100

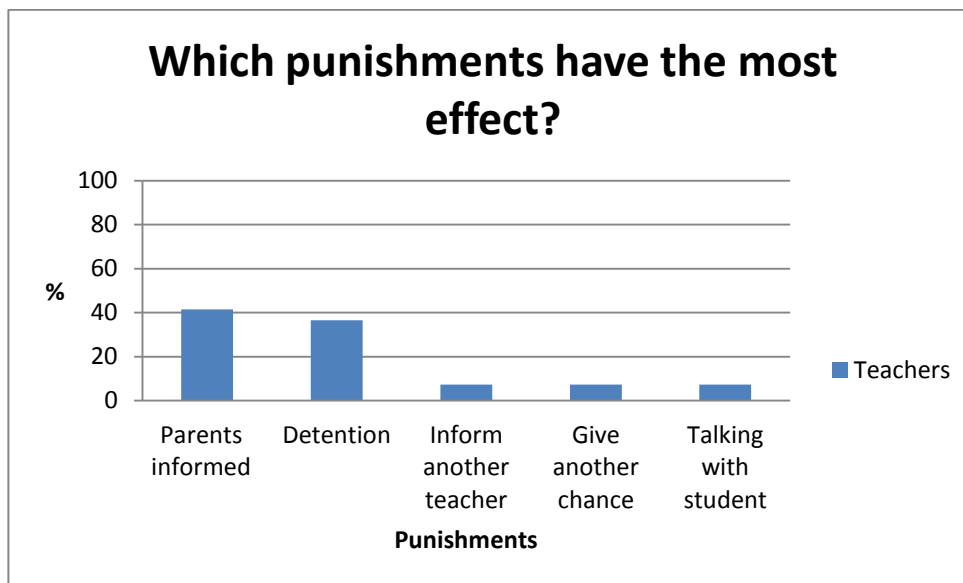


Figure 6.75: Frequency chart - Which punishments have the most effect?

Table 6.80: Frequency chart - Which punishments have the most effect?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Parents informed	17	42
Detention	15	37
Inform another teacher	3	7
Given another chance	3	7
Talking with student	3	7
	41	100

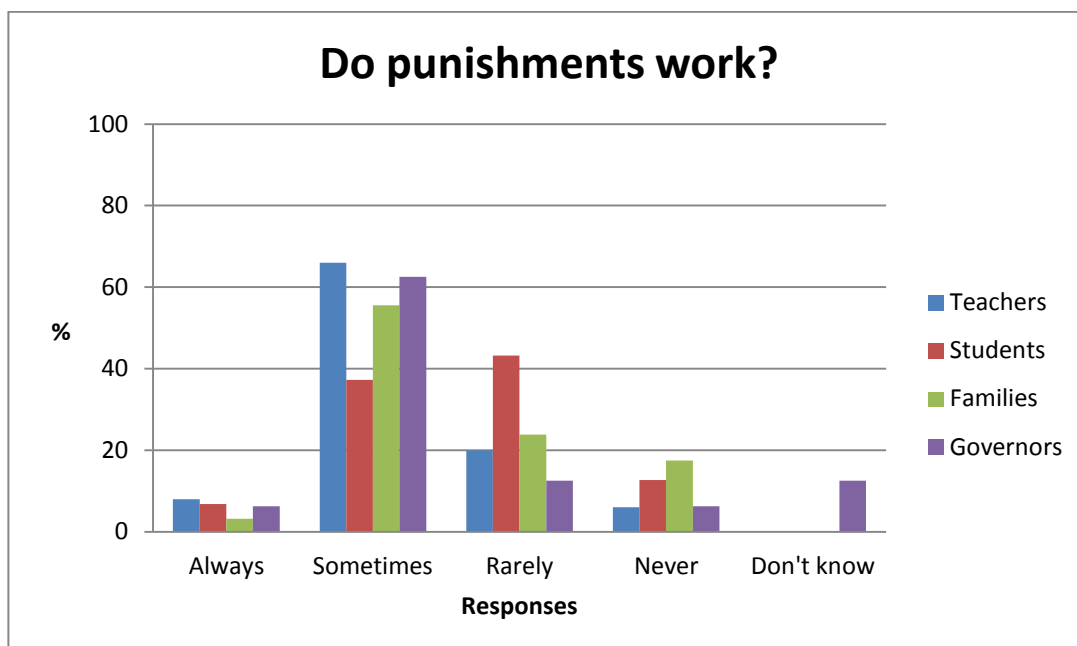


Figure 6.76: Frequency chart - Do punishments work?

Table 6.81: Frequency chart - Do punishments work?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Always	4	8	8	7	2	3	1	6
Sometimes	33	66	44	37	35	56	10	63
Rarely	10	20	51	43	15	24	2	13
Never	3	6	15	13	11	17	1	6
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13
	50	100	118	100	63	100	16	100

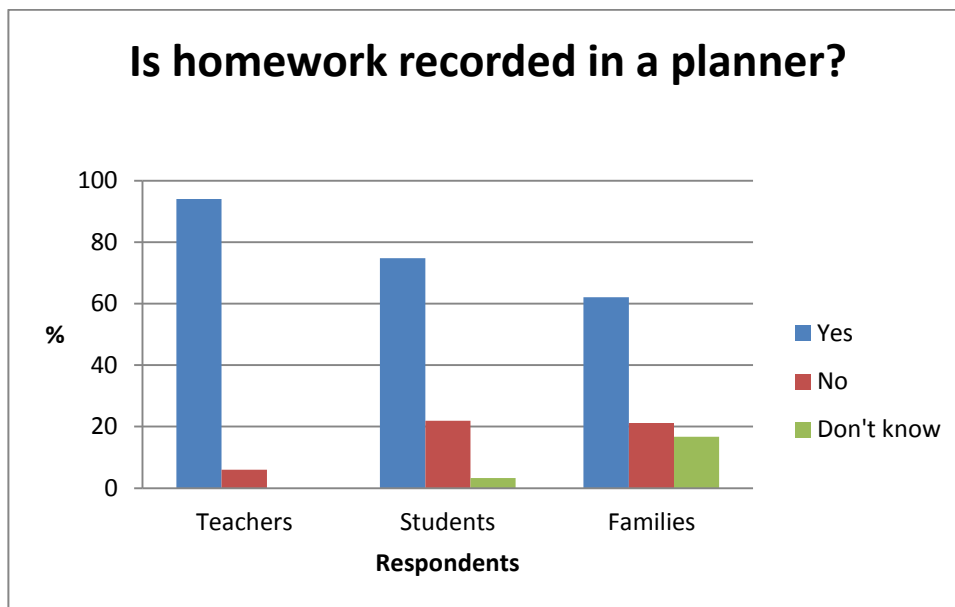


Figure 6.77: Frequency chart - Is homework recorded in a planner?

Table 6.82: Frequency chart - Is homework recorded in a planner?

	Teachers		Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	47	94	92	75	45	64
No	3	6	27	22	14	20
Don't know	0	0	4	3	11	16
	50	100	123	100	70	100

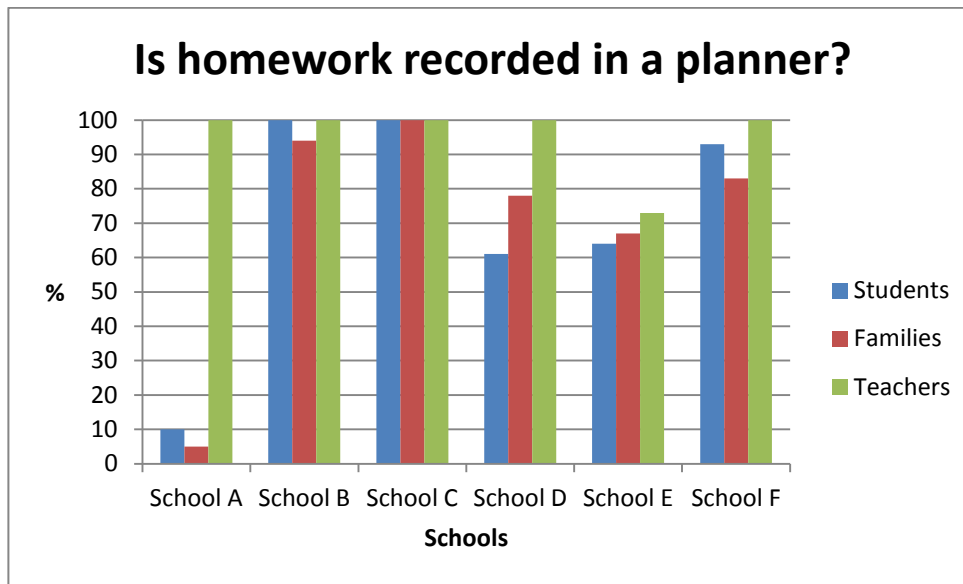


Figure 6.78: Frequency chart - Is homework recorded in a planner?

Table 6.83: Frequency chart - Is homework recorded in a planner?

	Students		Families		Teachers	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	1	10	1	5	1	100
School B	25	100	16	94	9	100
School C	5	100	5	100	7	100
School D	17	61	14	78	11	100
School E	16	64	4	67	8	73
School F	28	93	5	83	11	100

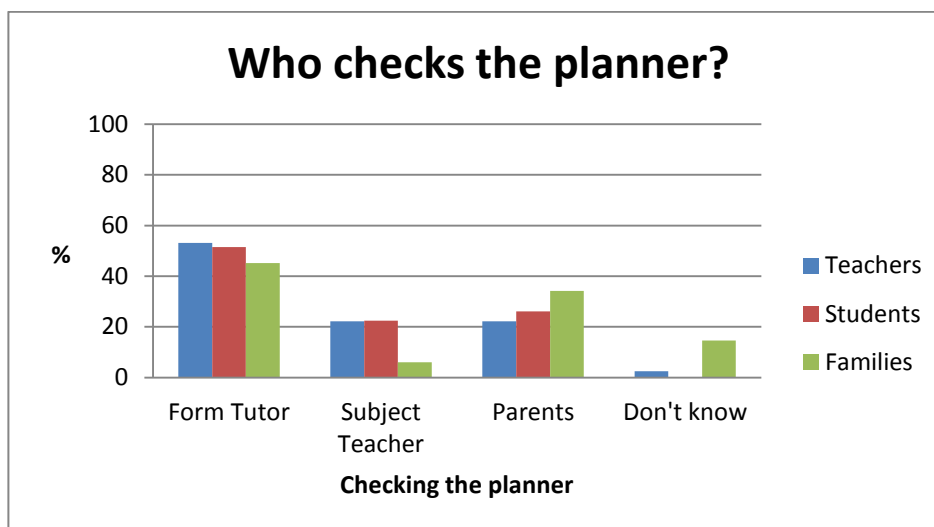


Figure 6.79: Frequency chart - Who checks the planner?

Table 6.84: Frequency chart - Who checks the planner?

	Teachers		Students		Families	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Form Tutor	43	53	71	52	37	45
Subject Teacher	18	22	31	22	5	6
Parents	18	22	36	26	28	34
Don't know	2	3	0	0	12	15
	81	100	138	100	82	100

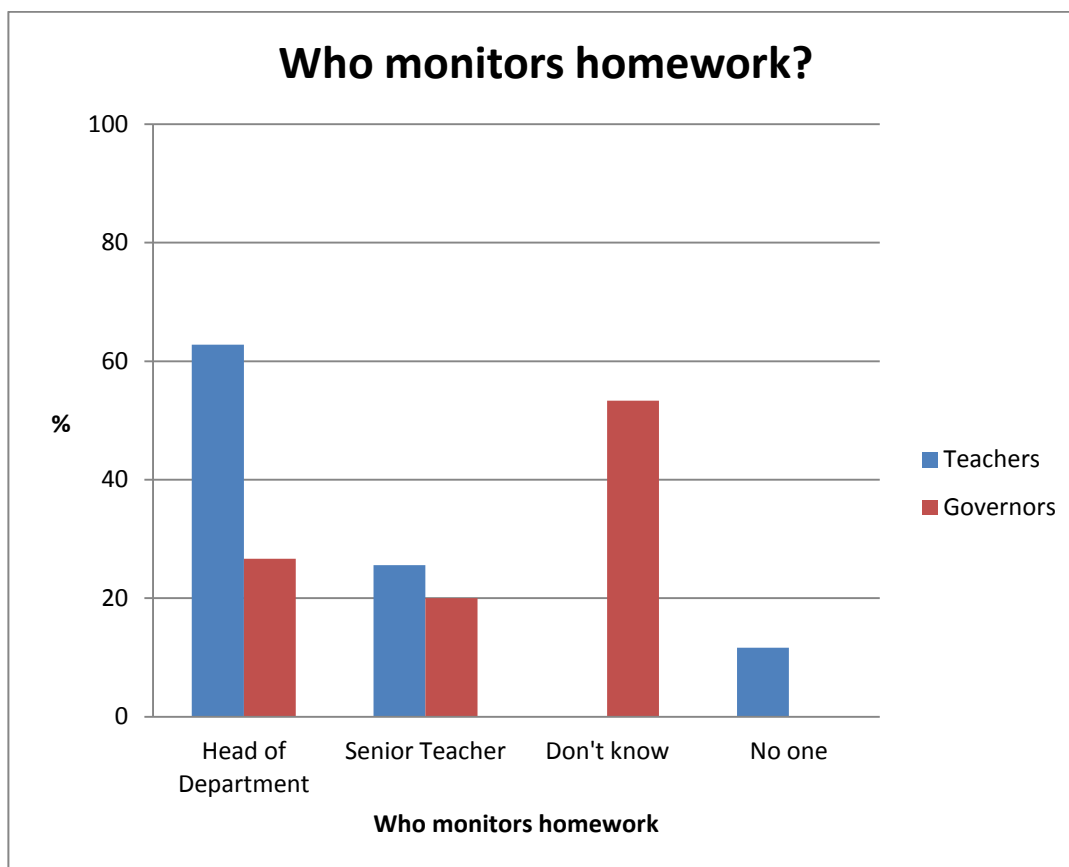


Figure 6.80: Frequency chart - Who monitors homework?

Table 6.85: Frequency chart - Who monitors homework?

	Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%
Head of Department	27	63	4	27
Senior Teacher	11	26	3	20
Don't know	0	0	8	53
No one	5	12	0	0
	43	100	15	100

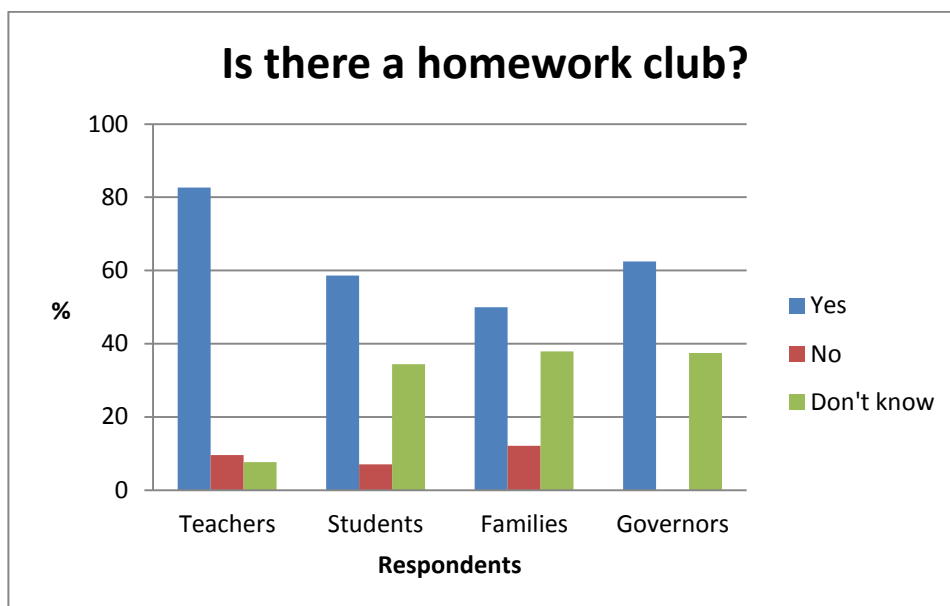


Figure 6.81: Frequency chart - Is there a homework club?

Table 6.86: Frequency chart - Is there a homework club?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	43	83	74	58	32	50	10	63
No	5	10	9	7	8	12	0	0
Don't know	4	8	44	35	25	38	6	38
	52	100	127	100	65	100	16	100

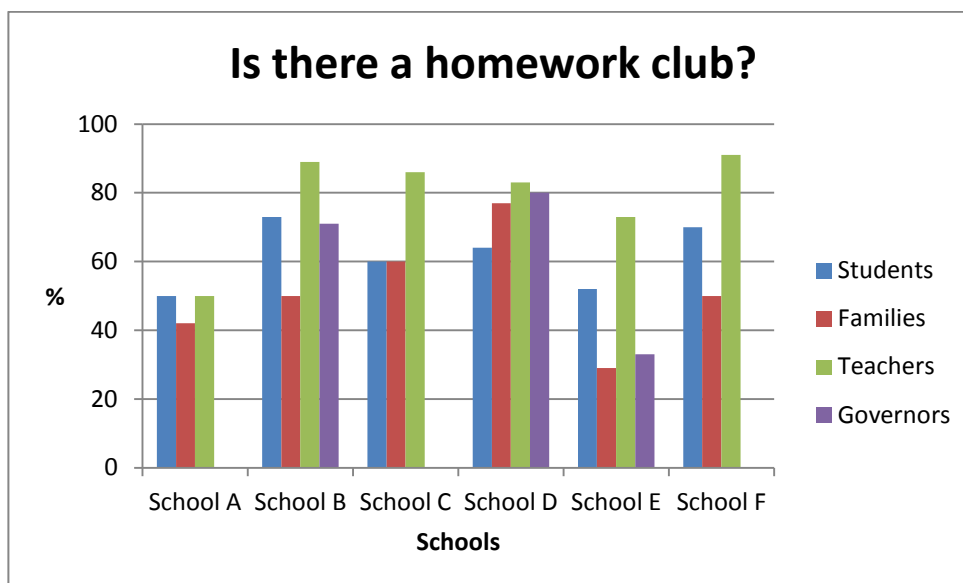


Figure 6.82: Frequency chart - Is there a homework club?

Table 6.87: Frequency chart - Is there a homework club?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	7	50	8	42	1	50	0	0
School B	19	73	6	50	8	89	5	71
School C	3	60	3	60	6	86	0	0
School D	18	64	10	77	10	83	4	80
School E	13	52	2	29	8	73	1	33
School F	14	70	3	50	10	91	0	0

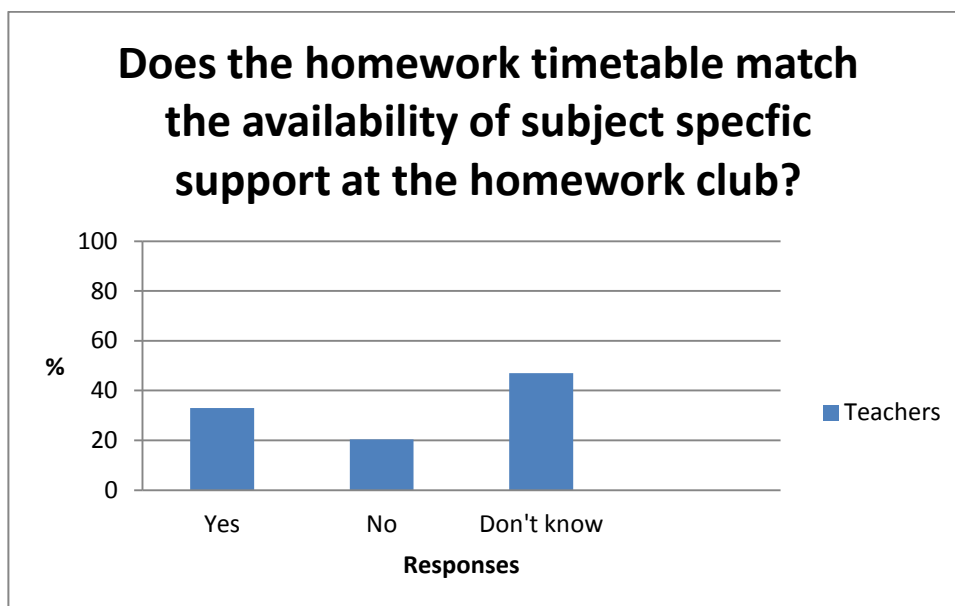


Figure 6.83: Frequency chart - Does the homework timetable match the availability of subject specific support at the homework club?

Table 6.88: Frequency chart - Does the homework timetable match the availability of subject specific support at the homework club?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Yes	16	31
No	10	19
Don't know	26	50
	52	100

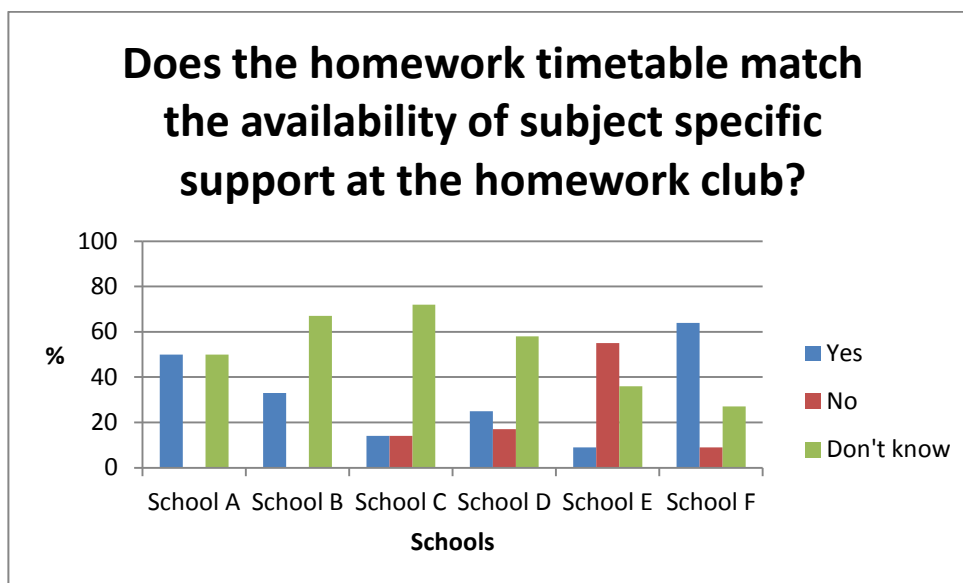


Figure 6.84: Frequency chart - Does the homework timetable match the availability of subject specific support at the homework club?

Table 6.89: Frequency chart - Does the homework timetable match the availability of subject specific support at the homework club?

	Yes		No		Don't know	
	n	%	No	%	n	%
School A	1	50	0	0	1	50
School B	3	33	0	0	6	67
School C	1	14	1	14	5	72
School D	3	25	2	17	7	58
School E	1	9	6	55	4	36
School F	7	64	1	9	3	27

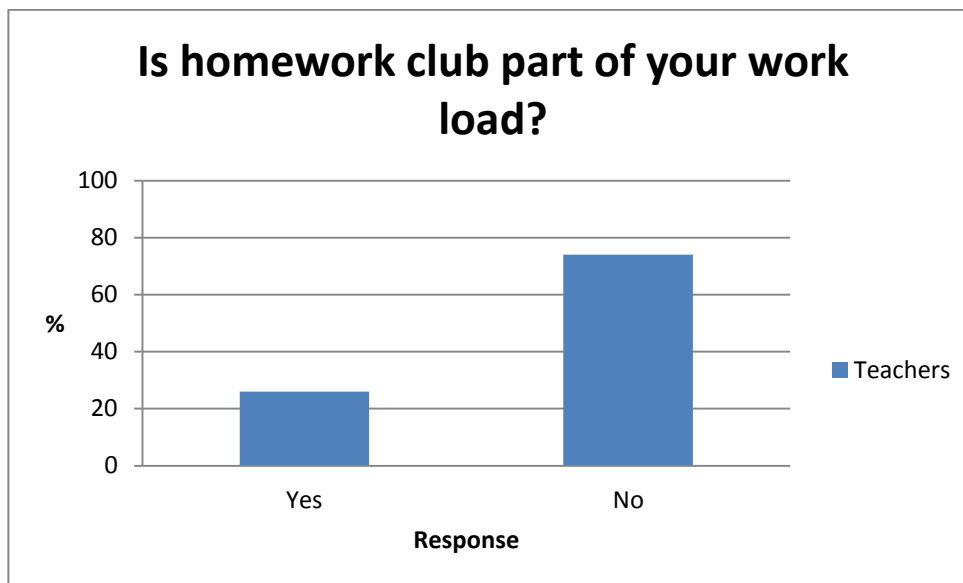


Figure 6.85: Frequency chart - Is homework club part of your work load?

Table 6.90: Frequency chart - Is homework club part of your work load?

	Teachers	
	n	%
Yes	13	26
No	37	74
	50	100

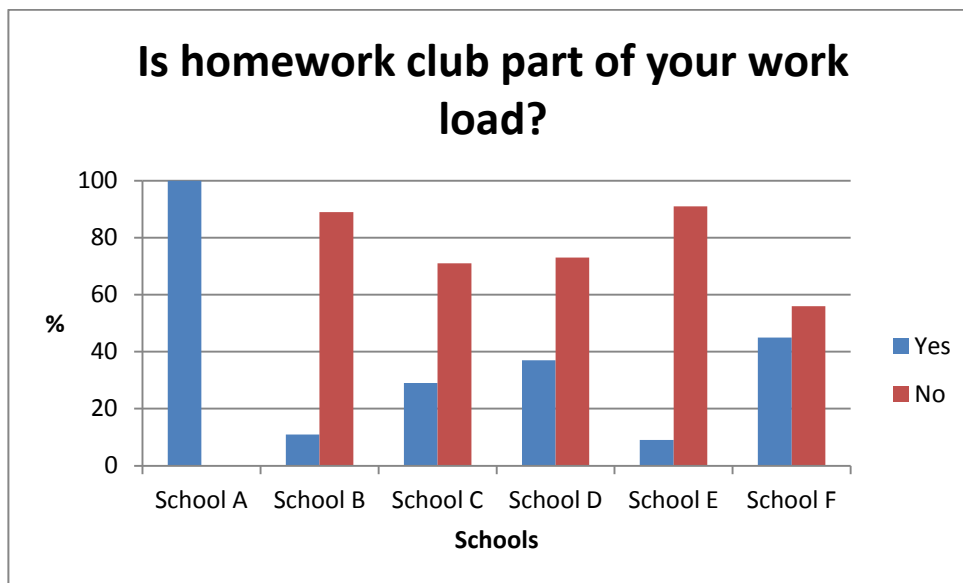


Figure 6.86: Frequency chart - Is homework club part of your work load?

Table 6.91: Frequency chart - Is homework club part of your work load?

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
School A	1	100	0	0
School B	1	11	8	89
School C	2	29	5	71
School D	3	37	8	73
School E	1	9	10	91
School F	5	45	6	56

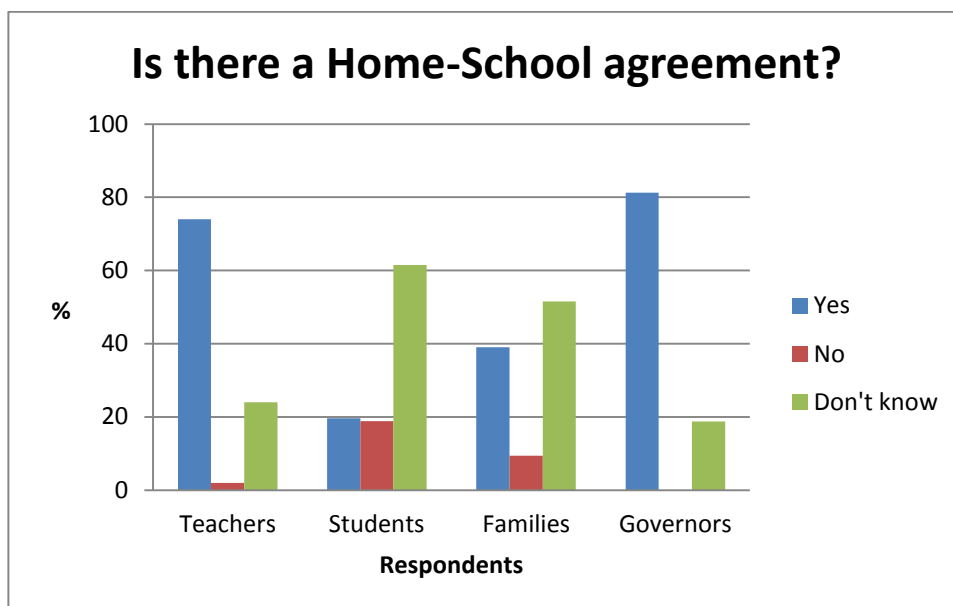


Figure 6.87: Frequency chart - Is there a home-school agreement?

Table 6.92: Frequency chart - Is there a home-school agreement?

	Teachers		Students		Families		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	37	74	24	20	25	39	13	81
No	1	2	23	19	6	9	0	0
Don't know	12	24	75	61	33	52	3	19
	50	100	122	100	64	100	16	100

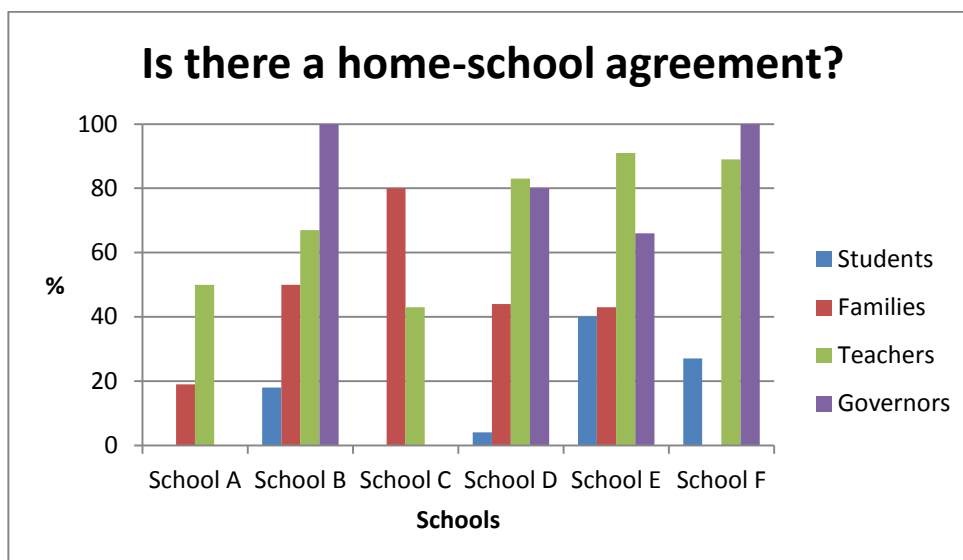


Figure 6.88: Frequency chart - Is there a home-school agreement?

Table 6.93: Frequency chart - Is there a home-school agreement?

	Students		Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	0	0	4	19	1	50	n/a	n/a
School B	5	18	6	50	6	67	7	100
School C	0	0	4	80	3	43	n/a	n/a
School D	1	4	8	44	10	83	4	80
School E	10	40	3	43	9	91	2	66
School F	8	27	0	0	8	89	0	100

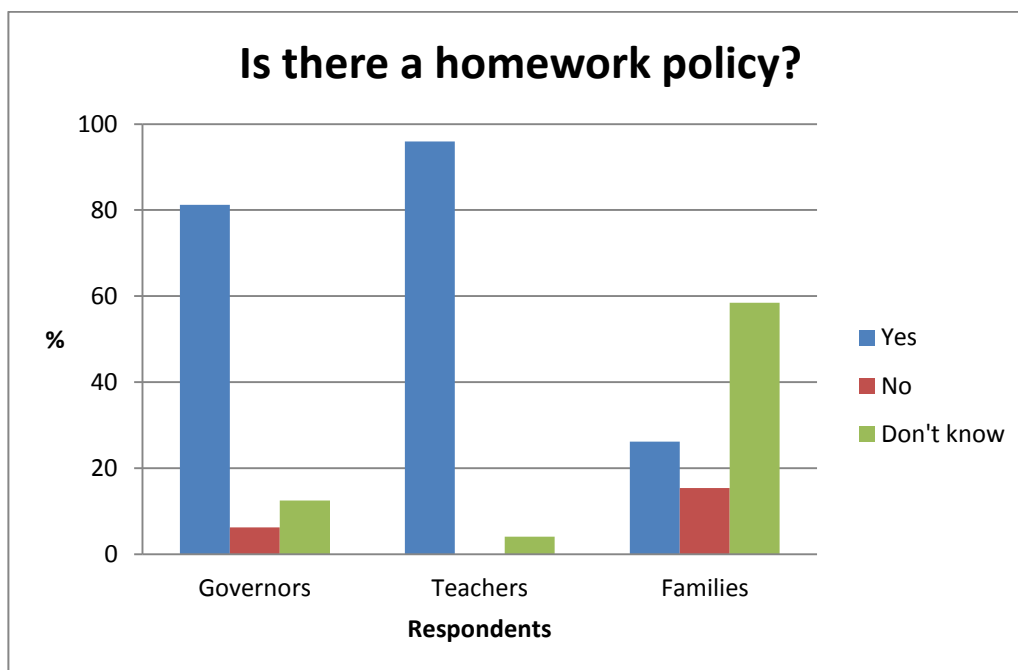


Figure 6.89: Frequency chart - Is there a homework policy?

Table 6.94: Frequency chart - Is there a homework policy?

	Governors		Teachers		Families	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	13	81	47	96	17	26
No	1	6	0	0	10	15
Don't know	2	13	2	4	38	58
	16	100	49	100	65	100

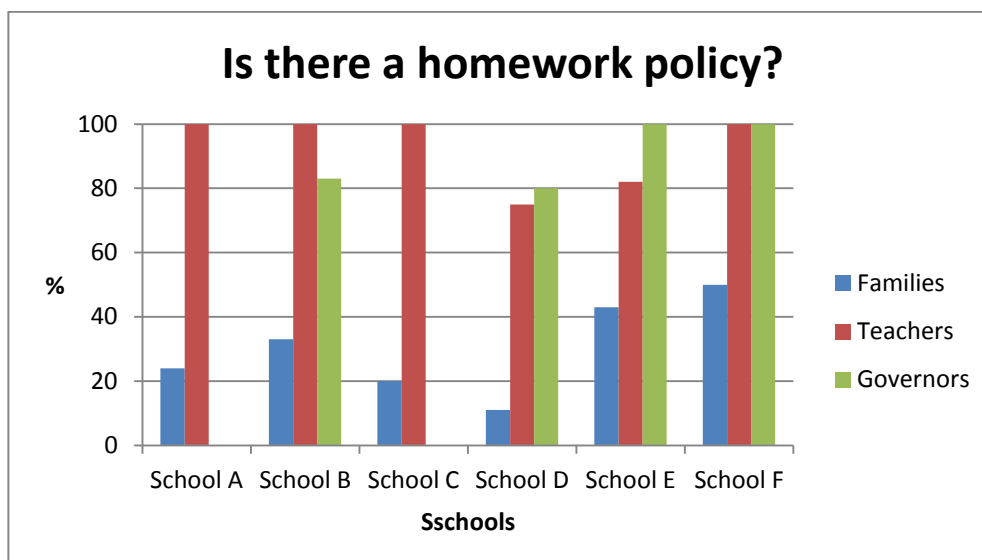


Figure 6.90: Frequency chart - Is there a homework policy?

Table 6.95: Frequency chart - Is there a homework policy?

	Families		Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School A	4	24	2	100	n/a	n/a
School B	4	33	9	100	5	83
School C	1	20	7	100	n/a	n/a
School D	2	11	9	75	4	80
School E	3	43	9	82	3	100
School F	3	50	11	100	1	100

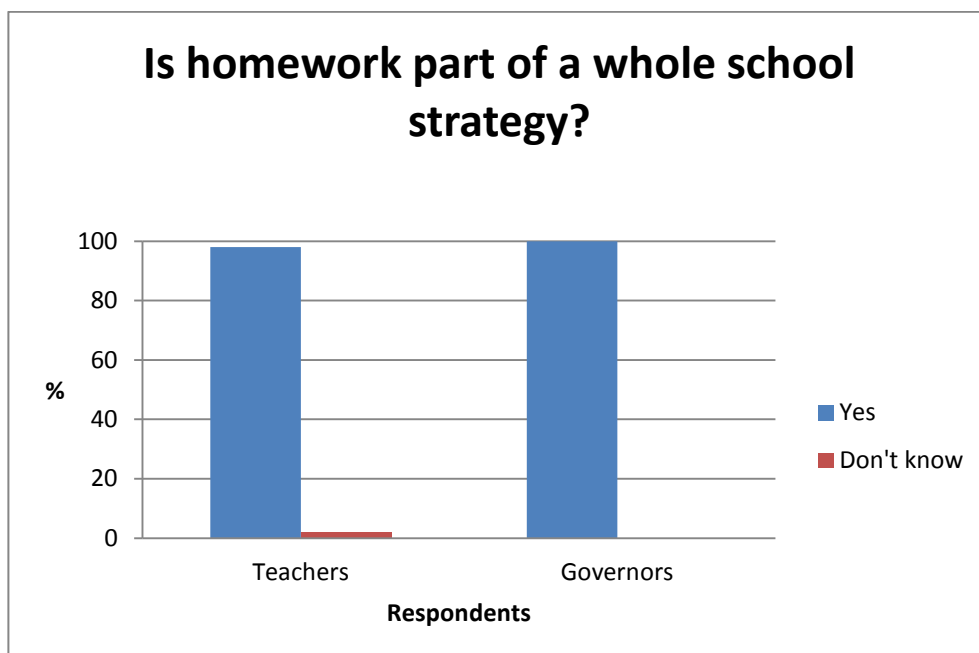


Figure 6.91: Frequency chart - Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

Table 6.96: Frequency chart - Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

	Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	49	98	15	100
No	0	0	0	0
Don't know	1	2	0	0
	50	100	15	100

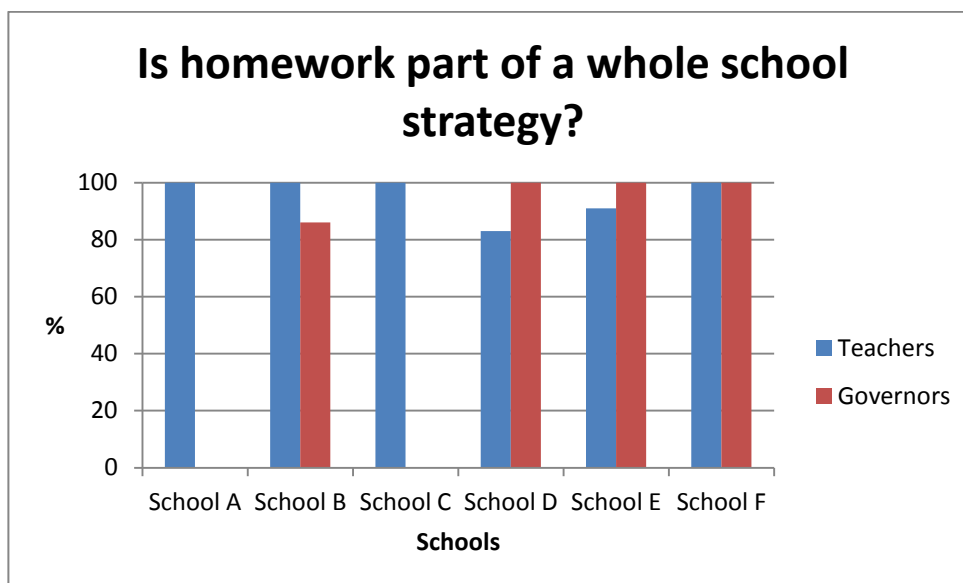


Figure 6.92: Frequency chart - Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

Table 6.97: Frequency chart - Is homework part of a whole school strategy?

	Teachers		Governors	
	n	%	n	%
School A	2	100	n/a	n/a
School B	9	100	6	86
School C	7	100	n/a	n/a
School D	10	83	5	100
School E	10	91	3	100
School F	11	100	1	100

Table 6.98: Frequency chart - Positive responses to questions related to home-school agreement, school policy and whole school strategy

	Students	Families	Teachers	Governors
Is there a home-school agreement?	20%	39%	74%	81%
Is there a homework policy	n/a	26%	96%	81%
Is homework part of a whole school strategy?	n/a	n/a	98%	100%

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